ETCH

magazine

vol. II
no. 1

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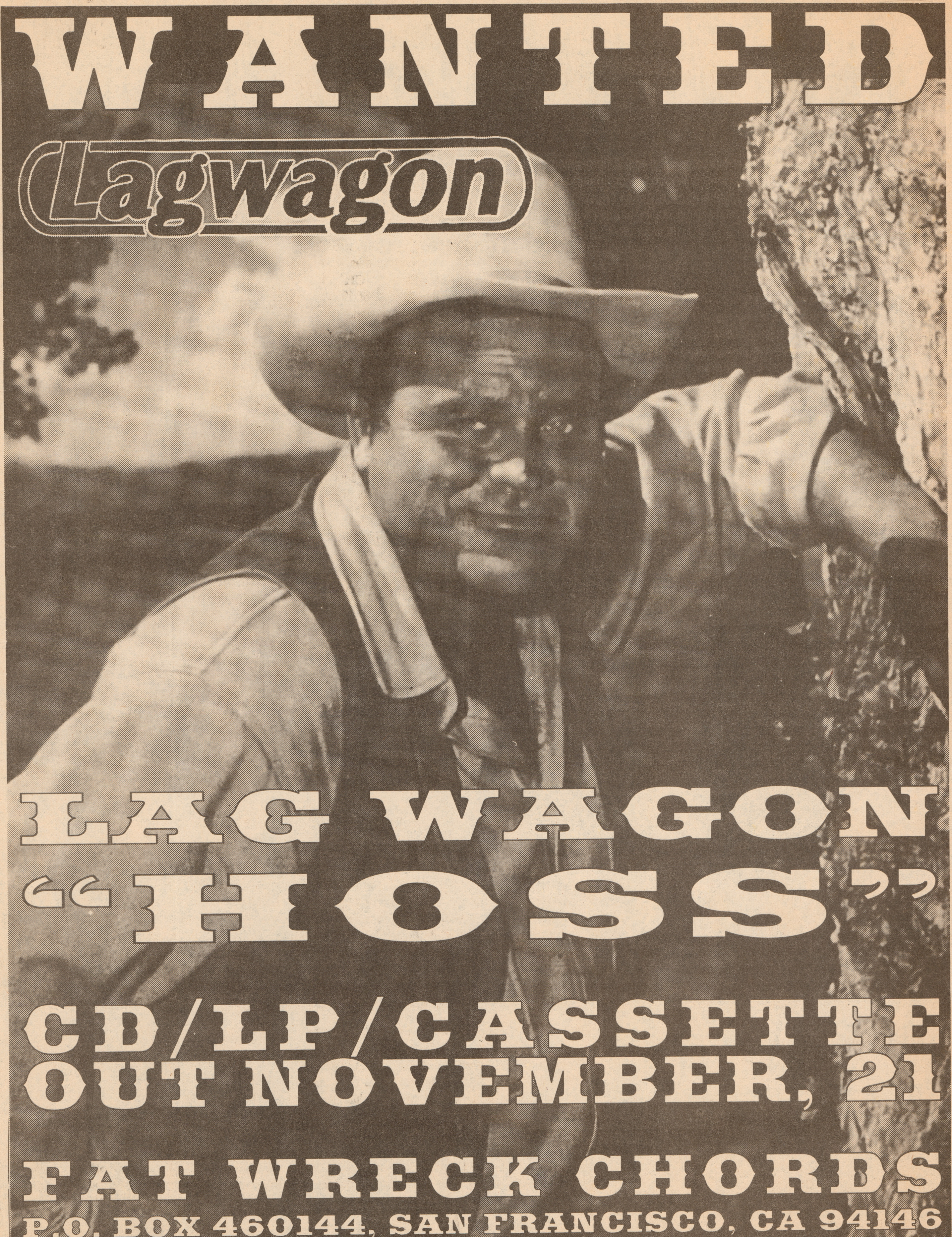
VS.
Esquivel



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by Erik Tschiggfrey

Blues In Technicolor or **The End Of Minstrelsy?**
by Richard Bowser

On the cover:
GRAVITAR and ESQUIVEL
Layout by Carl Hoch

Editor's Rant

The English have a word for people who are, well, jackasses. It's a wonderful word--one of my favorites actually--that word being "prat." And since this is **ETCH's** "year-ender," I figured I'd share with you my list of 1995's top prats. Lord knows there are plenty of candidates (in fact I'm quite certain that I'd make it onto many of your lists), but since space is limited, I'll be brief and limit my list to five with no particular order of pratness, just my top five.

1. **OJ Simpson** - My oh my. What a unique method of trying to find his ex-wife's murderer, the new social science I'll call "golf-course criminology." I'm speculating a bit, but I think that **OJ's** 9-iron is some sort of criminal divining rod that immediately locks in on murderous felons. If that's the case, we should give him credit for going great guns trying to find said criminal 'cause he's spending a lot of time on the links trying to crack the case.

2. The Honorable **Sonny Bono** - The first term congressman from California. Imagine having to admit publicly that your US Rep. is a cheesy hippie dipstick, who before becoming a politico, gave us the truly insipid "I Got You, Babe," as well as unleashing **Cher** on an unsuspecting world. The only people who should be more embarrassed than **Sonny's** constituents, are the misguided yobs in Iowa who elected **Fred Grandy** a.k.a. "Gopher" on the ***Love Boat***.

3. **Oliver Stone** - Hey, let's shape history to fit our notions of what "really" happened and then pass it off to John Q. Public as fact!!! And when people present us with the facts, let's use corporate bigwigs and government sponsored conspiracies as our "proof." **Mr. Stone** is more dangerous and more of a threat to society than **Limbaugh** could ever fantasize about. Plain and simple, he's a cultural fascist (i.e. "Don't corner me with the truth") -- enough said.

4. **Alanis Morrisette** - What can I say? She's pushing the envelope with her lil' potty mouth a la that other rebel **Liz** (yaaawn) **Phair** radical, alternative and vital music. Ain't it funny that her first record, which sank like a rock, was a poor man's version of **Mariah Carey**. So she switches gears and does the poor man's **Phair** thing hoping to snag a slot in next year's Lollapalooza. What's next? A boob job and **Madonna**-like soft-core? Listen sweetheart, you wanna shock us, try writing *good* music.

5. The Honorable **Robert Dole** - Uh-huh. Mr. Giggles is sure to be the GOP's nomination next year, and boy I can't wait 'til those "Man of the People" photo-ops start cranking out. This guy's as stiff as steel, as humorous as oatmeal and as warm as a nun. 'Course he's a virtual **Robin Williams** when compared to **Phil** "Life O' the Party" **Gramm**. As for **Sen. Dole**, I don't think people over 70 should be allowed to drive, much less run for the most important job in the world. C'mon **Bob**, doesn't a time share in Florida sound more appealing? You know, shuffleboard, checkers, talkin' 'bout the "big one........" N.Z.

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Check out the **ETCH Web Site** for more reviews, interviews, etc. Everything we couldn't fit in this issue is in our Site. Go on, check it out!

YAKSHIT!

To: **ETCH**, The Editor, and **Allen Salyer**

Thanks for including Z-Rock in your article *"What's New In Detroit Area Radio"* (Vol. 1, No. 6). But let's get a few things straight. Why the reference to this station as "Heavy Metal Head Bangers?" I've been here from the day we signed on and Z-Rock has never been "Heavy Metal" anything. What makes you say that? The **Filter** song entitled "Hey Man, Nice Shot" WAS NOT intended as a tribute to **Kurt Cobain**. It's about a Pennsylvania civil servant, **Budd Dwyer**, that faced with career ending legal indictments, called a press conference and shot himself on live television. It's in the **Filter** press kit, if you ever get your hands on one. We know it's a fact because we asked them personally when they visited our studio. What did **Filter** think of the "Hey Man, Nice Shot -Red Wings 95' mix?" They didn't like it. They happen to be Chicago Blackhawks fans. But you know what? Detroit loves the Red Wings. The fact is, CD sales in Metro Detroit rose measurably after we started playing "The Wings Mix." That made our "tampering" with their song worth it, I guess, because **Reprise** (**Filter's** record company) commissioned Z-Rock to make 500 "**Filter**/Z-Rock/Go Red Wings '95 Hey Man, Nice Shot" T-shirts to give out at the Stanley Cup Finals. They made sure that **Filter** were sent some too.

Thanks for "listening," and good luck.
Joel Morgan, Promotion Director
Z-Rock 102.7

Dear Joel,
We goofed! We're sorry for any inconveniences or problems we may have caused Z-Rock with our piece. It was purely unintentional. *Norman Z-Browski*

Hiya Norman,
OK, you're an old punk rocker but that's as far as our similarities go. Don't know who told you about me or how you get to know about my distro but I try to work underground, away from the rock'n'roll industry. Your 'ETCH' is assimilated by it. I hate what you write about, I don't think you understand the true meaning of punk. Keep away.

Bob (TiLT!) (at least that's what it looks like, ed.)

Huh?!? Your address was in a well-known nationally distributed punk rock magazine. Boy, some of you lil' punkers need to start eating prunes, you're too bound up! nz

Cleveland, Ohio's **Engine Corpse** are a bunch of racist, sexist pigs, according to the **Motor Dolls** who had the unfortunate experience of playing with them recently in the aforementioned city, refering to the **Dolls** as "bitches" and "niggers." Sound like a bunch o' geniuses to me... nz

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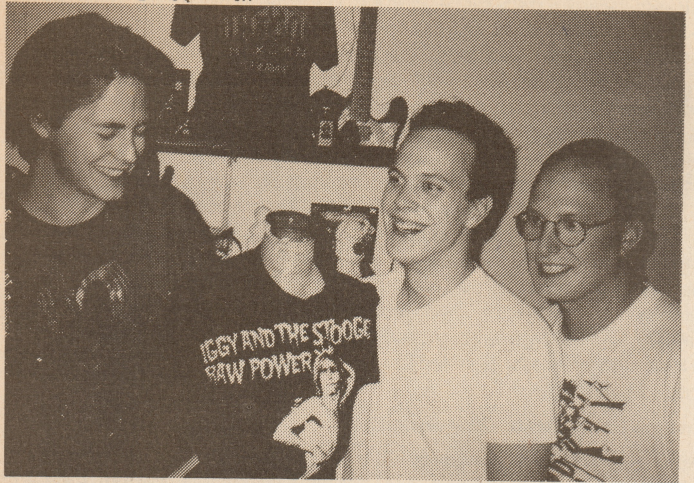

GRAVITAR

by T. Jack

For the last three years, **Gravitar** has been assaulting Michigan audiences with their own special blend of corrosive hook-laden noise rock. True, you may have to dig for those hooks, but when they grab you, you'll be held firmly in place while **Gravitar** bury you up to the neck in feedback skronk and surround you with a thousand laughing devils digitally delayed. One critic is quoted as saying, "If you're tired of playing your **Boredoms** and **Godflesh** records at the same time, never fear **Gravitar** has done it for you."

"For a noise band we've always been more rock-n-roll than most of our contemporaries," states **Geoff Walker** (vocals, guitar, clarinet), who along with brother **Mike** (guitar, vocals) and **Eric Cook** (drums), currently comprise the band.

"It's kinda weird because our label is a noise label," waxes **Cook** ironically, "...well, let's just say we're about the most straightforward thing on it," (the aforementioned label is San Francisco's **Charnel Music**, manned by indie mogul **Mason Jones**).

"**Mason's** done a lot of cool Japanese (he makes a sound like static) stuff," **Geoff** grins. "And of course there's his tribal drum fetish."

So where does **Gravitar** fit in this puzzle? **Cook** illuminates, "To someone who digs that sort of stuff, yeah...we're gonna sound a lot more rock-n-roll. To someone who isn't, we'll be a bit more 'out there.' It's a good mix." Apparently **Jones** agrees, as **Gravitar** has just released their second CD on **Charnel**.

"The first CD, '*Chinga Su Corazon*,' may have been a bit premature," **Eric** hesitates, "I mean, I still think it's terrific, but the new one...is great!"

"It's definitely more diverse," **Mike** throws in.

Truer words could not be spoken, from the monster groove of "Dust Devil," to former member, **Harold Richardson's** (last seen jammin' with **Velocity Hopkins**), "pretty" guitar on "Silver." **Gravitar's** latest self-titled offering runs the gamut with thudding intensity.

In addition to their **Charnel** releases, **Gravitar** has also released a split LP (with Lansing noise barons **Universal Indians**), which served to commemorate **Mike's** induction into the band. "Well, let's just say I screwed up and got a little vacation, courtesy of the federal government," **Geoff** stammers, "and **Mike** stepped in to replace me and wound up staying."

"I was really excited about joining **Gravitar**," the younger **Walker** states, "I felt, and still feel, it's a band where anything goes. You can really stretch out."

"I think they did a terrific job on that LP," **Geoff** mentions. "I'm proud of those boys..."

And so, with three releases under their belts, and the eldest **Walker** brother finally released from the Pen, **Gravitar** hit the road for a 19-day West Coast tour.

"The tour was probably one of the best experiences of my life," **Mike** reflects, "I mean, I met more people on that tour that I'd enjoy hanging out with than I have in the previous years of my life. And it was 'fun' for an extended period of time," he adds. "You might have great memories from a certain show or night or whatever, but touring was fun, crazy, weird and exciting for 19 days straight. We'll be doing it again real soon."

The bulk of the tour was done with a band known for tribal drums, face paint and wild on-stage theatrics. "Yeah, we felt very Midwestern, being the only band not in costume." **Cook** jokes and then adds, "It kinda started not to matter so much."

"At first it was like ooh everybody's kinda weird and we're kinda normal Midwestern guys." **Geoff** grabs the baton. "But hey, we're from Detroit, and the Motor City kinda holds this mystical place in their minds."

"They were asking, 'So, you ever been shot at in Detroit?'" **Mike** laughs. "'It's pretty dangerous there isn't it?'" **Geoff** adds,"...and these are kids who grew up in LA!"

"We played some cool shows." **Eric** throws down in an attempt to get the conversation back on touring. "Lots of large warehouses and loft spaces converted into clubs and such."

"San Francisco was great." **Geoff** chuckles. "The club owner, some crazy former hippie guy, said he found us very 'seductive...very seductive.'" Laughs go around for a while, then **Mike** adds, "San Francisco was weird because people were diggin' it and were crowded right up by the stage. It kinda freaked me out. We're not used to having people right in our faces."

"We tend to play for the 'girlfriend crowd' in Michigan." **Geoff** elaborates.

"Arizona was odd too, because people brought their kids to shows," **Eric** muses. "It was very odd to look out and see children dancing to us."

So, except for a serious case of **Stooges** withdrawal ("There was no **Stooges** anywhere." **Mike** laments) and, upon returning, the loss of guitar player **Richardson**, the boys seem to have some pretty fond memories of their first outing. The only question remaining is: What lays in store for **Gravitar**?

"We've had a few practices with **Mike** replacing **Harold** on guitar," **Mr. Cooks** says. "It was kinda strange at first, but it worked out great."

"In all honesty, we weren't sure if it would (work)," **Geoff** adds, "but it did. It's still very **Gravitar**."

"The basic feel and approach is still there." **Eric** summarizes.

"The new CD is out, the new record is out." **Mike** pipes up, "We're very excited, and we want to tour again."

When questioned about the rumor that **Gravitar** would be jamming with Detroit music legend/biker **Nicodemus**, **Geoff** replied, "I've jammed with him already. Unfortunately, he's sorta 'on the lam,' but **Gravitar** shall be recording with him in some capacity as soon as he looks us up."

"He took our first CD to a biker rally," **Eric** adds, "and told **Geoff** they played it all night!"

"Man, it's always something new." **Mike** laughs, "**Gravitar** is just like Christmas..."

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JUAN GARCIA ESQUIVEL

We at **ETCH** were fortunate enough this summer to have an opportunity to speak with composer/conductor/arranger **Juan Garcia Esquivel**. **Esquivel's** albums in the late 50s for RCA helped to popularize stereo sound and have influenced many in the music world. **Richard Bowser** spoke with **Señor Esquivel** from his home south of Mexico City. Due to the length of this interview it will be presented in two parts.

Maybe we could start by talking about some history, the things in the early '50s that led up to your albums with RCA.

I was in Mexico City, with my orchestra. I was very successful in Mexico then. I led for 10 or 15 years one of the leading bands in Mexico, and one day I decided, out of the blue, what should I do to improve, I was 33-years old. I started thinking, "Okay Juan, what have you done, where are you going from here? Okay, you're very popular here, you have won several trophies and several awards." I was then the best piano player in Mexico City. I had won the award for the best orchestra in radio, for the best dancing orchestra, and I had won the equivalent to the Oscars in the States, which is the Ariel. I won three Ariels for three pictures, in one of the pictures as the star. So I was very criticized by many enemies...in Mexico, because I had many enemies, I had many friends. When I was to make my debut as a movie star my enemies started putting words in my mouth, that I was going to show the actors how to act, and I made the picture because it was representing what I was; an arranger, a composer, and a piano player, which is actually what I was. And I accepted to play opposite one of the stars in Mexico, a star very well-known, by the name of **Lilia Perralo**... So I was thinking, on my 33rd birthday, "What are you going to do now?" I felt that it wasn't enough, what I had already in Mexico, and that I should do something. Of course, in my imagination the first thing was... the United States, and I said, "Well, the States, you have to fight so many competitors, there's such a huge field in the United States with wonderful arrangers, composers and musicians, what can you do?"

I started thinking about introducing my style of sound that I called SONORAMA, like panorama, you know? This is, nowadays, like stereo. Except in those days we didn't have the use of as many channels as which you can record nowadays. We had just one, we recorded on 1/8" tape. The way that I thought was to use different instruments, of course we didn't have then the synthesizer. So what you can do now with the synthesizers, and it's so easy to play, that you can produce many different sounds. I tried to follow with the conventional instruments that I had. There was the trumpet, the trombones, the rhythms, the percussions, and perhaps some French horns. I was playing for XEW, a radio station that was and is the most popular station in Mexico. They have evolved into a most powerful chain of TV... I started with trying to imagine new sounds. That was how I started in Mexico, with RCA Mexicana, I made my first album called ***To Love Again.*** And that album, strangely enough, wasn't released in the Mexican Republic. The Mexican producer for RCA found something he thought was very interesting and he sent the tape to RCA in the States, RCA Victor, and RCA immediately asked me if I could make more arrangements. They released ***To Love Again*** in the States. They didn't release it in Mexico. And they asked me if I could write 12 more arrangements. At that time, I had to fight with the musicians because in those days the musicians were not as professional as they are now, so I had to fight with them to be on time to the rehearsal, to double trumpets along with fluegelhorns, and the saxophones to double with the flutes and clarinets. And besides the voices, they didn't know how to read music. It was quite a difficult job to write an arrangement.

So I answered to RCA Victor that I could write 12 arrangements but it would take me 12 months. They asked, "How is that?" I explained to them that I couldn't count with the vocal group because they had to learn by heart, that is...by ear. Each voice, I had to rehearse them in my studio, and I wanted a steel guitar of my own sound, something similar to what I had heard from a North American musician called **Alvino Rey**. That wasn't available in Mexico, so I asked a fellow to build for me a steel guitar and I asked my guitar player to learn. I had to, well, not to teach him but to say to him what I wanted in sound. He agreed with me and the guitar was built. The guitar had, instead of one neck, he made a guitar with three necks, and we would figure out special tunings for the guitar. With the three necks and the sliding metal bar he would play in the special tunings that we figured out. We figured out the glissandos and the effects for the guitar.

I was asked by RCA in the States, "What happened?" So they finally said I could have 12 months to write 12 arrangements, and since I didn't have certain instruments and certain voices, that they would bring me to the States. They said, "What do you want?" and I don't recall exactly, but I think it was a 3-year contract with RCA in New York. So I said, "I'll go." I think they wanted to test me, to know me professionally. They said, "You go to Hollywood first and make a recording. Here is the list of the songs we want you to record." They sent me 12 numbers. One of the numbers was "Playfully." The composer...had been killed in an accident. They asked if I could give the royalties from the song to his widow. I made the arrangement for him, and the album was going to be called ***Beguine For Beginners***. I wasn't very sold on that idea, but it was my first job for RCA so I said I would do it. I have to confess now that I lied to them, because instead of writing, with the exception of "Playfully," I wrote arrangements completely different from what they had asked me.

I made arrangements for "Night And Day," and for "Begin The Beguine" and for "Granada," all the songs that...

That was *Other Worlds, Other Sounds*?

That's right. That was the first album. So I went to Hollywood. I had rehearsed with my Mexican orchestra the arrangements that I was going to record in Hollywood. I was sure that the arrangements were good, and without any fear I went to the States. **Johnie Camacho** was my producer. He is...from Cuba I think. And I remember the first time we met. He picked me up at the hotel, it was the Knickerbocker, in Hollywood. He was very nice, he said, *"Do you have the arrangements?"* I said, "Well, I have 12 arrangements, but I'm sorry, **Johnie**." I had to invent a lie, a white lie. I told him, "You know, my copyist was assaulted, was mugged by some thieves, they thought in his briefcase he was carrying money. So they stole the arrangements." "What?" he said. "Yes I'm sorry," I told him, "but I happen to have these other arrangements I hope you like." "What arrangements?" he said. "Well, 'Granada.'" "Oh my God!" he said, "'Granada?' That number has been recorded so many times!" "And 'Begin The Beguine?" *"No,"* he said, "I didn't want that. We are not in Mexico, **Juan**," he said, "you have to understand you are in the States, and here things are very different." So I told him to listen to the arrangements, and after you listen to the arrangements, you tell me if they are okay or not. I will write other arrangements, perhaps in Mexico, perhaps here. So we went to the studio, and when he heard "Granada" and "Begin The Beguine," all the arrangements, he said, "**Juan**, I am most convinced that you have done something great!" They changed the titles, it wasn't ***Beguine For Beginners*** anymore. They thought that this was out of this world, so they called it ***Other Worlds, Other Sounds***. And that was my first introductions to the...to the producers, to the field, to the style, how can I put up, to the American Fiels...

...the record industry.

Yes. RCA never, but never told me what to write. They told me, you write what you like. And I made selections of all the numbers, I don't recall ever being imposed to write a particular song or a particular style. **Mr. Herman Dios**, who is now retired, was the one who signed the contract. He made all kinds of concessions. I should pick out the arrangements, the songs I was going to write. I had choice in the musicians, I could choose who was going to sing, and nobody was supposed to interfere with my work, until my work was finished, so I was kind of a judge, jury and executioner of my producers because I was given a free hand. I continued with ***Infinity in Sound***. That was their title. I didn't put my hand on titles. After ***Infinity In Sound, Vol. 1***, came ***Infinity In Sound, Vol. 2*** and then was ***Exploring New Sounds In Hi-Fi*** and then was ***Exploring New Sounds In Stereo***.

That was the same album though, wasn't it?

No, I made two separate arrangements. At that time, it was the beginning of stereo. I recorded in one track. You should have seen the studio, because to obtain the different sounds that I wanted, I placed drapes and curtains on one side of the studio for sounds I didn't want to come out very brilliant. Another part of the studio was mirrors to reflect the sound, to get the effect I wanted. Another part of the studio I asked for half of the wall to be open, so we had the effect of recording out of the studio. Because you may know that environment is very important to the sound. If you have an open room, it is completely different than if you're between walls. So, with that done, as a matter of fact, they follow my ideas, they had to rewire completely two studios of RCA. One half of the orchestra would record in one half of the studio, the other in the other half of the studio and...

Was that *Latin-Esque?*

Yes. At that time, they said the first stereo we recorded in one each, each side of the tape was one each. I found a way to make three channels instead of two because we recorded half of the left side tape, that is one third, then we used the center of the tape as the third track. You could get the effect by recording half of the tape, then the other half of the tape, then the center. I don't know if I'm making myself clear.

It was like the "Mercury Living Presence" classical records.

Right. We could get that third channel. I had my experience with my orchestra in Mexico and my experiences making ***Other Worlds, Other Sounds*** led me so easily to recording in stereo. My arrangements were in stereo without having known that stereo could be done. So, I considered that recording a success for me. I was more worried for the stereo sound than for the orchestra after ***Latin-Esque***, which sold very well, and it should have. I was ahead of my time, or perhaps the audience was not ready for my style. But nothing really beats that. I recall that I gave to RCA the right for 60,000 albums I would not receive any royalties, because they were promotional. RCA would give each one when you buy a stereo set. So I released any responsibility of 60,000 albums they sold with 60,000 stereo sets.

My copy of *Latin-Esque* doesn't have a cut-out sleeve (*Latin-Esque* was part of a series released by RCA called *Stereo Action*, which featured elaborate die-cut sleeves). Would that be one that came with a stereo?

Yes. It was the only album they released that way that I know of. ***Stereo Action***. They called me to make a demonstration of what stereo sound was. Because stereo sets were not as popular as they are today, they asked the audience to watch TV and listen to the radio at the same time and they used the radio left channel and the TV as the right channel and they called me "Mr. Stereo" and erased my two first names, which are **Juan Garcia**, because in Mexico we have a custom, your first second name is the name of the father and the second is your mother. (**Esquivel** is his mother's name) My father's name is **Garcia**. I remember that my first opening in Lake Tahoe, because I used to have a very impressive entrance...the musicians were all dressed with ties and in black. The musicians were not supposed to...many of the orchestras today I see them in shirts, or even sometimes without shirts. And the girls at the beginning had different gowns because I had not the money. Afterwards...they were dressed according to their nationality, because I had an Italian, a Swedish girl, an All-American girl and a Japanese girl. So according to their nationality, the Japanese girl with the high collar, and the girl from the United States would dress in a gown of the style and the date. The Italian girl would wear something the same, the same kind of embroidery, the same kind of lace, depending on the kind of dresses. At Lake Tahoe, I used to go on with a strong entrance, something to attract the attention of the audience, because I believe you have to attract the public's attention. When I play, this is not because of ego, because my ego isn't reflected in my appearances, but I hate to play for people that (are) drinking or eating, but I want their complete attention, and the only way is to attract their attention. So I would make a big entrance and say, "Ladies and gentlemen, my name is **Esquivel**." I remember the very first night, one of the fellows in the audience said your name is what? And I said my name is Jose Alberto Juan and a long list of names, some of the names were invented by me, and after I said about 12 names, I said you can call me "Esky." That was the first time and I will always remember that night because we did very well.

When was that, the late 1960s?

No, it was 19...my opening in Las Vegas was 1963, and the opening in Lake Tahoe was 1962, like in October. I was hired to perform for like three weeks, but I did so well, well, you know the novelty, and I wasn't known and my group was the first group with full singers. The beautiful part is the singers were an eye catcher because they were beautiful, beautiful women and talented, which is a more difficult thing to do. They sang first as part of the orchestra, because I first saw somehow in 1959 the ending of the big band era, this can't continue any more because of the expenses of traveling with 24 musicians and five singers, impossible. The hotels, the transportation, everything. So I foresaw all that and decided to make a smaller group... We made our debut (at Harvey's Resort Hotel in Lake Tahoe)...we did well. We did two shows a night, a dinner and another show late at night. After the three weeks, before we ended the contract, **Mr. Will Osborne** was a composer of a song that I don't know if you're familiar with, something the neck bones are tied to the head bones...

Dry Bones?

Something about bones. He was popular at one time. He bought my act sight unseen, because when he went to my home, I was living in Beverly Hills, **Mr. Ernie Venuto** was my agent. He went to see me with the idea of the big band, and then I was with a small group, and **Mr. Venuto** went to see me and said, "**Juan**, wouldn't you like to perform in a nightclub?" And I said "Yes, I would like (that) very much," because I was foreseeing the ending of the big band. I liked the idea very much because he said "we need you, whatever you can do, you can do it." I start to thinking what I can do. I called and said, "I don't have any idea of what I can do." And he said, "Okay Juan, I heard your recordings." He was very impressed with ***Other Worlds, Other Sounds***.

"So I leave it up to you," he said. "How much do you want?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Do you think you can do it with $8500 a week?" And I said, "Sure!" I was very happy because first he hadn't seen the show, he didn't know what I was going to do. I start to thinking, I have to make this good. I thought then that me playing the piano with rhythms was not good for the audience, because it's very difficult unless you play in a small room. So like mothers do with the kids, to give them castor oil with syrup so they won't notice, so I can play piano, but I have to do something to attract their attention, because no audience can stand two or three minutes of being still. I want the audience attention at all times, so how can I achieve that? With women, beautiful women, the showgirls would stand with the orchestra in the back and then I would introduce them one-by-one, separately. They were excellent singers. The Italian girl had a beautiful voice, soprano, she would sing the musicals on Broadway, ***The Sound of Music***, that sort of thing.

They were singing actual lyrics, not "zu zu zu," right?

Oh yes, with words. The reason why I wouldn't put the words in my arrangements is I wanted it to be international. That's how I started with the "zu zu zu's" and with the pows. The girls were different, they had to attract the attention of the audience, so besides singing my arrangements with "zu-zus" and "pows" and "boings," the Italian girl would sing with a very powerful voice Italian songs. Then I would introduce the American girl, singing songs that were popular at that time. It was kind of rock-n-roll, but it wasn't rock-n-roll, it was the sound that was popular at that time. The boogie-boogie, the swing band, psychedelic music.

I had beautiful girls that were very young. This girl she lied to me because she was 15-years old, I thought she was 18. She wouldn't be able to perform with me, especially in the nightclub or casino until she was 18. She lied to me. But she was a beautiful girl. Very classic. All-American girl. Very pretty with long hair, with very very pretty eyes. I don't remember if they were blue or green. Very pretty girl. Each one of the girls had to be better than the previous girl, so they were competing. To the surprise of audience, each girl was better than the previous one, a different style, and then after the all-American girl would sing kind of psychedelic music, then the girl from Switzerland that could yodel so beautifully. You know, the yodeling that mountain people in Switzerland do. She was a show stopper. She would come with a song that is called "I Would Like To Yodel." It was such a surprise, because first she would sing like a ballad, then suddenly we would change the pace, and she starts yodeling. The audience interrupted with applause. She was a beautiful girl.

And then you would say, well, what's going to be the next one? Each one of the girls would sing separately, and then in between I would play piano numbers with the orchestra backing me. I had just a trumpet, guitar, bass, drums, bongo and the organ. All of that was very carefully planned. I had the trumpet for strong sound. Then the guitar for the dissandos. I used the drums for the rhythm, the bass is fundamental, the bass is very important. You can tell how good an arranger is by listening to how he uses the bass in the arrangement, actually he played a baby bass. I didn't like the sound of the old double bass. With the drums, it makes a strong rhythm. Nowadays, this is with all the respect to the groups, but they don't pay enough attention to that. Now they play with chords. That's good for guitar, but not for all arrangements. That's how the musician plays with feeling. I was very careful for writing. I didn't write the music for the girls. The music for the girls was written by my organ player. He was the one that changed the pace and changed the style, because he wrote them especially for the voice. And after the yodel, there was **Deela Lee**, such a beautiful girl. I was so sorry when she left the group. She called it a clash of personality. We used to get along very well. She stayed with me for five years. Then one night, with the music we were very perfectionist, she wanted to sing her way, and I wanted to play the things my way, and it was just nonsense. She got mad and left the stage after her number. I thought it was necessary to keep the discipline of the group.

I fined the musicians for not being on time to rehearsal, it was one dollar per minute. The girls were fined five dollars if they gained weight for each pound. They were very careful not to gain any weight. They had to be because of the gown. Each gown was close to $1000, just imagine, I had to play three shows in the Stardust. Three times four girls (equals) 12 gowns. That's for one night. To keep them looking different, because the audience in Las Vegas stays two, three days, sometimes one week. And if they like you, you have to have seven times twelve gowns, just an enormous amount of money. My manager used to ask me, "What is this huge bill for gowns? What are you doing?" I'm charging money for attending my show, and I want to pay back, and the girls have to be well dressed. I didn't allow them to gain weight, because then the gown would be wrong you'd have to fix the gown, and so I really conducted my group well. I remember one fellow, he says, **Esquivel** is one who conducts his group with an iron hand. He softened the expression. He conducts with a velvet iron hand.

Iron hand with a velvet glove!

It was a fact. The girls had to have their eyes me at all time, at all times they have to smile and be looking at me, because I was playing the piano, but my eye was on them. And I would turn my head and smile to the first one, and the second one, and the third one and all of them should have their eyes on me because there was one, it was in Canada, I think. Two guys were looking at my group and one guy said I wonder why the girls are always looking at **Esquivel** at all times. And the other guy said "to satisfy his ego," and it wasn't to satisfy my ego. It was that I conducted with a movement of my hand or a twist of my fingers. I had a wonderful light man, each POW!, each effect, each accent, I had four spotlights, so if I had a drum solo, the spotlight was on the drums. The light was accenting what I was playing. It was for the orchestra numbers. It was very interesting to watch the show. I wish I would have had the video in those times.

END OF PART 1

Next time we talk with Esquivel about the role of humor in music and his experiences in Hollywood.

ROLL OVER WAGNER: U.K.'s

ULTRAVIOLENCE

USHERS in the TECHNO-SYMPHONIC REVOLUTION

by **Norene Cashen**

I'm not at all surprised when **Johnny Violent** tells me he favors the music of **Wagner** and **Tchaikovsky** over any breed of pop, rock, or dance beat. One could even compare the theatrical story-telling formats of his records to the narrative progressions of an opera or a symphony.

The 25-year-old post-Kid Vid from Nottingham also has a penchant for keyboards and video games. Feed all these creative interests into a recording studio (in his bedroom) and you get a frighteningly intelligent blend of extreme, alienated techno and existential pondering. **Johnny** made his first record on his own. Then he released another on the **Food** label in the UK. He was dropped, signed with **Earache**, and in 1994 he put out both an EP and the full-length ***Life Of Destructor*** (**Earache**) which chronicles the rise and fall of an Earth-purging robot sent by God to exterminate bad humans.

Now this lone keyboard king returns with a new futuristic saga that intends to attack our present. On his 1995 release ***Psycho Drama*** (**Earache**), **Johnny** pours on the power of impossible-to-please gods, the frustrating battle between conscience and instinct to create an electronic symphony that would make the angels in heaven want to grab their harps and start a circle of singing around the feckless, fucked-up Jessica and the emotionally castrated, gun-toting Hitman.

The story goes like this...Jessica is born helpless into a hostile world--dragged by destiny through a miserable childhood, abused and unwanted. She first looks into the eyes of the genetically engineered, almost robotic Hitman when he is hired by a low-life street pimp to kill her. But before Hitman can pull the trigger, he falls deeply in love with Jessica. He kills the pimp instead, and the lovers run away "killer and victim indivisible." The two form a suicide pact and... Well, I won't spoil the surprise that awaits by revealing the outcome.

The album's 15 tracks never stray from their singular, biographical mission and all the while--from "Birth/Jessica" to the final "Heaven Is Oblivion"--writer/engineer **Johnny** supplies a complex, thousand-heart-throb soundtrack injected with rotating dominant antitheses--love and hate, life and death, joy and pain--that mercilessly guides the fates of the heroine, hero and their creator. "I started writing ***Psycho Drama*** about a year ago. Well, even before that," **Johnny** explains. "When I was finishing up ***Destructor***, I had the idea for the basic plot line which follows the lives of Jessica and Hitman. I wanted her to represent a kind of victim and him to represent a kind of murderer. And those are kind of two sides of me. I thought at that time. Well, I still do".

"A lot of the time I find that I've lost my way a bit, like Jessica. Then there are other times I find myself more like Hitman, very calm and calculating. So that was the basic premise. Then I set about chatting to people who had been victims of child abuse and also with a man who had a particularly harsh outlook on life--like fighting and things like that...which I don't. But he was interesting to talk to also.

"I gathered together this information by Christmas time, and I wrote a script and very basic bits of music. This took about a month to do. Then with the script I got six vocalists to play the different parts, and once I had all that recorded--we're talking about March now--I set about sampling and I put it all together. That normally takes about a week or two. On ***Psycho Drama*** the music is pretty complicated. I don't know if it sounds basic or not, but it isn't. I wouldn't say the album was a nightmare to record, but it was quite a dark experience, because everyday I had put myself in the shoes of these people who are pretty darkened and disturbed personalities. I had to go through that all the time for a number of months. And it was quite strange really."

Johnny faces his demons alone. He creates, writes, records, and performs his music virtually alone, with the exception of hired actors and singers who are present for a short time in the studio. His live show is a solo performance with samples and keyboards. "I do everything alone which I think is a kind of strength," he says.

Johnny's trek across the United States began on December 6 in New York and ends Christmas Eve in Los Angeles. It will be **Ultraviolence's** first American tour. ***Psycho Drama*** was released on November 28 in the U.S., but won't hit stores in Europe until January.

"I'm probably a bit more well-known (in Europe) than in the States. But it's still very underground. I'm not a big pop star or anything." he says, not mentioning that he was once featured artist for one of the "**John Peel**" radio sessions.

While the December "introductory" tour and an extremely danceable new record may put **Ultraviolence** on a typical fast track of increasing popularity, **Johnny** hopes the music of ***Psycho Drama*** will stimulate something beyond mirrorball libidos and pumping ravester sweat glands.

"So much dance music, just because it's intended as party music, either has no words or if it does have words, they're very vacuous and uninteresting," he says. "I love techno rhythms, but often there's nothing on top of it. I think it's such a powerful sort of form and it should be used to handle big issues. It was the same, I suppose, with rock music; when it first started out the words were very vacuous and inconsequential. Then there were some artists who took it further. I don't know that rock was ever powerful enough a format, in just the way of the sound, to get things across. When people started doing what are known as 'concept albums' with rock music, I don't think they ever really worked, because I just don't think there's enough variation in the sound to make it interesting enough.

"I'm a big fan of classical music, and all pieces of classical music are 'concept albums,' if you like. I find that sort of music much more inspirational. I listen to lots of **Wagner**, which deals with things that are similar to the things I deal with, only obviously in a much older context. If you have a 100-piece orchestra, I think that's so much more interesting than rock music, which has a few guitars or whatever."

Before he was creating the kind of multi-faceted soundscapes that can keep up with two characters moving through their "tunnel of destiny," as he calls it, **Johnny** weaned himself from an all but consuming video game addiction and began working with computer music programs. "I never had much of an interest in anything besides video games until I was about 16," he recalls. "I started playing with music programs on my computer and I found that more interesting than playing games. So I bought a keyboard and hooked that up, and played with it until I was about 20. When I was 21, I made a record called ***Shout***. The B-side was called "You'll Never Sleep Tonight," which I thought in 1991 was quite a different title for a techno track, because they were always called 'Rave On' or 'Your Hands In The Air,' or something like that. I had a record deal with that one. Then I was dropped and signed to **Earache**."

Being signed to **Earache** (home to **Napalm Death**) and putting out records like ***Life Of Destructor*** under the name **Ultraviolence**, could be misleading. "The music is violent," **Johnny** agrees. "It is only recently that I put so much emotion into it. When **Ultraviolence** started, it was more about the violence of the planet itself. Now, I think, the violence has extended to all of life as well. It was a great release for me. And it was very difficult to leave it at the end as well, because I was used to living with those two people all the time in my head."

After he parted ways with the dramatic inhabitants of his imagination, what **Johnny** unleashed was actually very sensitive and conscious--a well-orchestrated and delicately woven depiction of life, death, and our futile attempts to understand or separate them. As all those kids boogie-down under strobe lights to the blips and drones of ***Psycho Drama***, I wonder if they will hear the echoes of **Ultraviolence** reiterating the unanswerable questions that have plagued many an artist...long, long before the life and times of **Johnny Violent.**

$WINGIN' UTTER$:

Old School From the Streets of San Francisco

by n. bates & harry k.

At the time of this interview, the **Swingin' Utters** were starting the second leg of a three month tour -- some 90 dates in all. We were able to catch up with them in Marshall,Mi. at an all ages show (and a month later at the **Warped Festival**). After a two week hiatus, they were planning on going back on the road until December (they recently played the **Shelter** with **Hagfish** and **Hoarse**). There was even a possibility of the band going to Europe or Japan. The band, a five-piece, consists of **Max Huber** - guitar, **Darius Koski** - guitar, **Greg McEntee** - drums, **Johnny Peebucks** - vocals, and **Kevin Wickersham** - bass.

First off, let's start with the fact that you saw the "less than stellar" review one of our writers gave your album, *Streets Of San Francisco,* (see ETCH #4) -- here's your chance to refute it.

Kevin: Well...whatever... He doesn't know us. I don't know him. He's never seen us live. I don't know what his trip is. I don't know, no one's obligated to like our band. I think he's got the wrong idea about our band. I don't necessarily think "fuck California" is a really open-minded thing. I don't think that's breaking much new ground either. I'll leave it at that.
Johnny: Plus we take good reviews with bad reviews. People are into different things.

How long have you guys been around?

Johnny: This line-up's been around for three years. We started writing originals and playing around about five years ago (Kevin, Greg and Johnny have played together since 1988).

Why did you drop "Johnny Peebucks" from the name of the band?

Johnny: It was too long and people have short attention spans. It was just easier, (promoters) screwed up our name for shows.
Greg: They screwed up our name in every way possible (*Ironically, the **Warped Festival** flyers had the band listed as the "**Swingin' Udders**" ed.).*

A lot of people think you're an Oi band...

Kevin: We're not!
Max: We're a punk band, but we listen to Oi music, probably as much as other bands do. We did some Oi covers -- a **Cock Sparrer** tune.

How much touring have you done and how do you stand each other living on the road?

Kevin: It's easier this year, 'cause we got a van. Last year we had a Toyota pick-up truck with a shell and a trailer, with five people - this time we've got six - but it was two in the front and three in the shell. It was hell. This time's not so bad because we've got a lot of room. We've been friends for a long time, so we know what pisses people off and what doesn't. We just get along.
Johnny: This is our second US tour. (Our) tour last year was six weeks, but this is more intense.

Did you go through a booking agent or did you book this tour yourselves?

Kevin: We did some ourselves, but this guy, **Eddie Numbskull**, booked...
Max: ...the majority of it.

Have you gotten screwed anywhere, or have things worked out?

Kevin: No, not really.

Some bands that do an "indie" tour come to a place like this and the promoter says, "Well, here's $25; sorry." Have you had any situations like that?

Darius: We've kind of expected that to happen, so it's not surprising. We've had some shows that fell through. We've had some shows where they didn't pay us what we were supposed to get. But this is what we wanted to do, so we knew what we were getting into when we said we didn't want to play rock clubs. We wanted to play places where the local punks were putting on shows themselves. So you know there's always going to be problems, but I'd say the majority of them turned out pretty well. The worst is shows falling through -- we've had a couple of those.
Kevin: Especially if it's the night of it and you're all psyched for it. You sit in the van and go, "What are we going to do tonight?" We showed up in Neenah, Wisconsin to this big old place...the Ridgeway Inn...
Greg: It was huge!
Kevin: I think it could hold 1700 people or something and we were like, "Why the fuck would we play here?" And the people working there had never heard of us or anything...(it was) weird.

It wasn't like the *Blues Brothers* movie, where you show up to a Country-Western bar?

Johnny: It was pretty close.
Max: It was a total country bar.
Greg: It looked like it.
Kevin: The people (working) at the bar were way cool. They let us kick down some free beer.

Any problems in Michigan?

Kevin: We played this place in Hamtramck called the **Falcon** last year with **Chaos UK**.
Max: A bunch of Nazis showed up for **Chaos UK**, so everybody was kind of uncomfortable.
Johnny: It smelled horrible in there.
Kevin: It smelled like puke.
Max: They had these fans and they were blowing the vomit smell all over the place, instead of blowing it out the door. We wanna go back to Detroit (*Remember this interview was done before the **Warped Festival** and the **Utter's** recent December show at the **Shelter**, ed.)* and play a show at a different place. We have some friends that've played there and they loved it. They had some really good shows.

Are you going to do any club dates, or is this strictly an "all ages" tour?

Max: We're going to do some club dates, plus some "all ages" dates. We're doing some dates with **Sheer Terror**, like five or six shows with them. Some of them are going to be in bars, but I bet they'll be "18 and up" at least. They should use wrist bands. People with 'em are "21 and over," and those without them all ages. That way you can have the best of all worlds.

Have you guys had to play any "house" shows (*A common occurrence in the "City of the Arts," East Lansing, ed.)* on this tour?

Max: Yeah. In St. Louis we played in somebody's basement.
Kevin: In Fairmont, Minnesota we played in someone's basement and they had a lake right next to it and a boat, so we got to cruise around (the lake) and water ski. It was so fun.

Have you had any other memorable moments from this tour?

Kevin: One of the good ones for me, although it's not so memorable for me because I guess I was pretty wasted, (was) when we were in Minneapolis -- which I would say is one of the best places we've played -- I was drinking with some people and ended up in a duck suit.

So, what are your long-term goals?

Kevin: To keep playing and playing.
Max: To play forever. To keep touring, keep making records and raise enough money so we can live our lives without having to work, just play music.

Do any of you work "day jobs?"

Kevin: No.
Max: Sometimes.

So you want to just go on the road and make your money that way?

Max: We're trying to do that now
Kevin: We sort of...
Max: We're going to try to stay on the road for the next six months.

Finally, what do you think of some punk bands (i.e. Offspring or Green Day) getting so popular?

Max: I like a lot of the bands. Some of them are friends of ours, so we wish them well.

And Moses Came Down from the Mountain

by E.Tschiggfrey

As I hear the rumblings and bumbling coming from Capitol Hill - as the White House spends time and money tying good old **Bill** to a white horse in hopes he won't fall off while the cameras are rolling - as a looming shut down hangs over our heads - I am set into pondering politics in the U.S. It all seems so terribly inefficient. Have we carried checks and balances into the realm of the ridiculous?

Nelson Algren springs to mind. When an interviewer tried to corner him about the freedom we have in the **U.S.** (in comparison with other parts of the world) **Algren** replied "It's as though I were in a flood in Mississippi and the water is up to my waist and you're saying 'It isn't really serious, because there are people who are drowning in the Volga.'"

There are people drowning in the Volga but what is our waist water? What is our waste water? Gristle-toothed **Bobby Dole** lurches onto the television screen trying to spook the horse. He looks so much like the "**Grinch Who Stole Christmas**" and yet he reigns supreme over our illustrious Senate. The Senate is the answer. The Senate spins me into a lengthy digression / editorial.

To think that the Senate was established as a sidekick legislative body that would counter the population representation of the House of Representatives. Established out of a fear - which any political scientist will tell you is the foundation of any society. Out of a fear from those who dwelled in the smaller states - a fear they would have no say in the legislative process and perhaps a bill, like one ending slavery, or one that favored port cities, or one that inhibited genocide of native peoples could be whisked into law by the more populated states. To quell this fear two legislative bodies would be needed. One based logically on representation. According to your population you would get a number of representatives or in certain cases 3/5ths of a representative, which is very logical (in respect to the moral hypocrisy of the times) for a representational democracy which the United States, out of the pages of **John Locke**, was establishing. The smaller plantation states knew that even if they could count their slaves as 3/5ths they would still be out populated by the larger states. Enter the creation of the second legislative body, the Senate, no more than a pacifying addition injected as law in order to please some of the smaller states and therefore cushion a little further the fragility of the republic. A curious sidebar is that the Senate made more political jobs available for the founding fathers. So the fragility, which was due to mistrust, over zealous self importance and a disagreement on the moral hypocrisy of stating all men are created equal while the cotton was a flying, was in fact stabilized and the Union grew and flourished and in fact eventually dominated. Grew and flourished to the point that it was able to withstand another war against its former motherland and complete a war or rather a systematic annihilation against its indigenous population. So with the two houses everyone was happy circa 1790 and beyond.

Now 200 years later and there is no more slavery, it only took a hundred years, a civil war and millions dead to correct that constitutional typo. Although it took another hundred years to empower all **African-Americans** with the actual power of citizens a.k.a. the right to vote, ride busses, eat and live where they chose. In the land of the free, women can now vote but for nearly 150 years they were relegated to the political sideline with no say so in how their lives would be affected. It took 130 years and a general give-in by the "Small Penis Club" circa 1920 to correct our founding father's original oversight. These facts, which should be familiar to all, I mention only to demonstrate that the founding fathers did not bat 1000% when they constructed our United States - our great democracy. Can the tangent grow and become a full blown recantation of the hypocrisy that underlies the very words that are so deified in the Constitution? No. That will be curbed for the moment - but the fact remains that after the Civil War there was no reason - no politically practical reason - to have a Senate because there was no need to juggle the additions of new territories into statehood with the delineation of free or slave in order to keep a balance. Proceeding the Civil War this balance had to be kept in order to nullify any bill that would endanger the economy of the south so directly hinged to slavery. **John Locke** must have been turning in his grave. So logic and economy should have made the Senate cease to exist after the Civil War. However, to end the Senate as an institution would have taken a majority vote by the very Senators who would be voting themselves out of a job. Since there were (and are) no term limits (another oversight) the Senators might be in fact, due to the power of the incumbency, voting themselves out of a lifetime job. They have to face the human nature bugaboo: which is should I do what's best for the people or what is best for myself. A bugaboo indeed! If the bugaboo isn't enough - the Southern Senators were still representing the lesser populated states - they had a genuine interest to keep some archaic and vested power placed equally through the states. So here we had a "Catch 22" bugaboo which remains to this day.

So should we just face it and keep two legislative bodies where we only need one and continue to let millions of tax dollars go to support the salaries of the Senators and their huge staffs and all the fringe bullshit that goes with the job? Should we continue to watch the inefficiency of two legislative bodies, one representational of what the populace would choose and the other representational of what a state would choose? 200,000 **Americans** have the same power as 20,000,000 - voting on the same bills that affect all Americans equally? Voting and not always agreeing - sometimes disagreeing outright (over a pittance in the proposal) and therefore letting inaction reign supreme. Isn't over 500 legislators enough to make a law? Do we need to add another 100 non representational voices to our representational legislature? Does this not make our government bigger and more inefficient than necessary?

The first step in changing government for the better is to eliminate its waste and its uselessness - which allows fat pocketed special interests to buy legislation amidst all the confusion. Eliminate the confusion and you eliminate the shadow. The Senate is no longer needed but we habitually cling to it as an institution because we believe our system so right and so beyond reproach that anything beyond minor tinkering brings about shouts of traitor or un-**American**. Overhaul is unheard of and the engine knocks are rectified by turning up the national radio. Social and political paralysis to anyone who mentions ideas that are not in the mainstream. No other politician will deal with a person who is willing to rebuild the engine when all other noted political thinkers (co-conspirators?) have replacement plugs in hand. Politicians don't want government smaller. Politicians don't want sweeping change. Politicians don't want new ideas. There is a comfortable little niche that has been built for them. If they have delusions of grandeur before entering the system those ideas are purged or soothed away by the system itself. They forget or don't care to remember that once we stop reaching to improve government - that once we accept a capitalist democracy with its two houses as the supreme then we fail ourselves in striving for a better alternative. When we cease to grow we stagnate. Read **Fuchiami** (I can't remember the essay) he covers it all in detail. Remember the **Constitution** is only a piece of paper. You could wipe your ass with it like it was a yellowed **Sears & Roebucks** catalogue stowed away in an old outhouse. The outhouse! What an example of forward thinking, the outhouse was at one time thought to be the best and most comfortable place to discharge fecal matter. **Sears & Roebucks** was better than leaves. Who would dare put the shitter in the house - what a revolting and antisocial topic to even mention at tea parties. You could wipe your ass with the old Constitutional parchment and the earth would not stop spinning. You could wipe and God would not come from the heavens (or wherever God comes from) and shoot lightning up the anus of he who dares to soil the ark of the western covenant. Why does toilet paper need to be two-ply, for Christ's sake isn't one-ply enough? The insanity of someone to think they need two-ply toilet paper to wipe their ass. Wipe your ass with the constitution and we'll send your commie un-**American** ass to the gas chamber.

Somewhere in the anus or rather the annals of **American** history the **Constitution** has become an icon - a relic. I don't think people really realize the implications of deifying a piece of paper. When the written word over 200 years old is considered unquestionable then what we have is a tyranny by parchment. Not to say that many of the ideas incorporated in the constitution should not be honored in a modern revision (equality for all men and women, separation of church and state and the entire **Bill of Rights** and subsequent Amendments - especially Amendments because they were added along throughout history and therefore are rational in relation to the transpiring events of time. A modern constitutional convention needs to be called and one of the ends of such a convention should be the dissolution of the Senate. Another end of such a convention should be the institution of term limits. The founding fathers - mistake-ridden as they were - were indeed very prophetic and correct when they warned us of the fate of incumbency - the danger of unlimited office. The power the incumbent wields through his office is really the power to remain in his or her post forever. Remain until he or she decides to run for a better post or becomes involved in a major and indisputable scandal or does an abominably horrific and noticeable bad job. So by and by there is about an 80 percent chance that an incumbent can keep his or her post unless they fuck up really bad.

Politicians can keep their job because people are so reluctant to change. The Senate, as an institution, can remain because people are so reluctant to change. A foot remains in the water as it comes to a boil because people are so reluctant to change. What is the impetus for change? Perhaps the answer is very Hitlerian - a mysterious fire on Capitol Hill and then affix blame on the Communists.

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GAZ

SUPERGRASS

What could possibly ruin this show for me? **Supergrass** are my current rage with their **Coco** release barely leaving my tape deck. Bless all for the band making their third appearance in the Detroit area in one year. Before I continue to gloat any further, there was an aspect that could've made a pisser of an evening. It starts with the fact that **Supergrass** are big time in the UK with a top seller release. That doesn't bug me. The factor that comes off dorky is this: The method of promotion. Some alternative station in Detroit took over the promotion by setting up some deal for the listener by selling the ticket for (as I heard from the singer **Gaz Coombes**) a mere buck. Sure it could benefit the band by it being all ages and cheap tickets. **Gaz** seemed confused by the set-up, so what's the point of blaming the band. As for the blame, did it seem that the radio station was whoring **Supergrass**, and whose benefit was it really for? My problem is that it sounds like some corporate weasel deal, shit, **Supergrass** are a great band, so why force an element of success just because the **Supergrass** craze hasn't hit the States yet? It just seemed that the promoters were begging people to come. The 100 or so people that were there, I believe, would've come even if the price remained the $8.00 charge as it was intended to be. The bottom line is that the music speaks for itself and always comes first.

Fred Beldin and I did the interview, then did (as I recall) a two-hour **Supergrass** smoke-out session (see **Fred's** article next issue, he'll fill you in). I carried the superhaze up to the balcony to chug down a heine-dark beer (thanks **Kristina**) and check out the **Soundgarden's** old bass player's new band **Truly**. Total 70's retro in a lousy, unimaginative sense. My attention would wander unless **Fred** would raise his fist and yell. I know he was kidding, I swear.

Chicago's **Triple Fast Action** were next. A little more interesting. Maybe the best explanation would be a sensitive **Melvins** that quickly sank into college rock obscurity. My attention wandered once again. Fuck this.

By this time, my posse was dispersed so I went searching for more **Supergrass** chronic. I found the **SG** bass player checking out the Detroit skyline, and had a "theory" chat about **Iggy & The Stooges**. Now that's interesting, by God. Sorry about bragging, but you need the interesting points, right? Screw humbleness! Right before **The Supergrass Band** hit the stage, I managed to borrow a camera for some action shots (thanks **Rob**!), and readied myself at best. The stage had a huge silver and black silhouette of a **Supergrass** figure as their backdrop. Wow. The band sauntered on and had "that" look of weird English retro about them. Hey, you can't go wrong with tight plaid trousers, right? The opener was "Sitting Up Straight" and they ripped right into that fucker. I also noticed it was a bit slower than the studio version, but that wasn't a problem throughout the night. These guys were exhausted from what I gathered, due to the record's success and being "quickly" whisked to the States for another tour. The exhaustion didn't stop them from being very tight and solid. Drummer **Danny Goffey** is nuts! Crazy-assed pound drumming comparable to the ***Live At Leeds*** - era **Who**. The kid's a natural hard hitter. Bass player **Mickey Quinn** was the weight all bands need. Flawless backing vox with smoother-than-**Bruce Foxton** bass lines. Singer/guitarist **Gaz Coombes** is a god-damned star on stage. Scrawny, hazed, solid as a shit brick, I was expecting scissor kicks, but I received a light bounce (See: exhaustion). **Gaz** was great, the man delivered well. They also managed to score a keyboard player named **Blade** for a few cuts. Some real choice moments were: "I'd Like To Know," "Mansize Rooster," and definitely "Strange Ones." Unreal. So they played a near solid hour and now is the time for a few photos. Ugh, the lads were visibly whipped and the guilt set in. This means I got to be the weasel journalist flashing bulbs in their face, thank god they laughed it off. They had the patience, click-click-click. **Gaz** gave me a few more chronic hits, I thanked and wished them well, while receiving it back kindly. **Supergrass** are a great bunch. What a good night. **Bryan Ramirez.**

LETTERS TO CLEO FIG DISH DIRT MERCHANTS

industry pontiac 9/27/95

Three cool bands all at one location. Lucky for me I knew all three bands and was looking forward to them, as opposed to most, who only knew **Letters To Cleo**.

Dirt Merchants are a sonic disruption band, with girl vocals and the occasional countrified folk tune to break it up. I don't know if it was intentional, but I noticed the band was color coordinated: Vocalist **Maria Christopher** had a bright red **Les Paul** guitar against red pants, guitarist **Mike Malone** had a powder blue **Fender** and blue pants and bass player **Alex Kisch** had a beautiful black Rickenbacker bass with black pants. **Maria** has cool, spiky bangs that cover her eyes like jail bars. Someone in the audience complained that there was too much distortion in the guitars. No, if anything, there wasn't enough as **Mike** switched between a lightly brushed, **Phil Manzanera** chord style and fought his amplifier for more feedback. **Alex** played full bass chords and the occasional maracas for added percussion. **John** has a full compliment of cymbals and is a joy to behold. I'm one who likes to watch the guitarist bend strings, but **John** was just too good to not watch. The last song was the best, as **Maria** and **Mike** stood side-by-side, playing the machine head string part of their guitars -- it looked fascinatingly odd.

Fig Dish are a loud, raw power grunge band. **Mike Willison**, the bass player, had his hair pinned up like "**Buffy**" from *Family Affair*. He fell over a couple of times and was too drunk to get up on his own, but amazingly enough, continued to play in time. That the whole band seemed loaded didn't help their performance much; not one song ended cleanly, so no one knew when to applaud. Vocalist **Rick Ness** had the same attitude as **Bruce McCullough** on ***Kids In The Hall***. He played hard; so hard he busted his guitar strap. **Andrew Hamilton** had blonde surfer boy looks, played the drums hard and solid with lots of cymbals. The best song of the night had to be their parody of **Alanis Morrissette's** "Hand In My Pocket," sung paralyzingly off key.

Letters To Cleo came on after a much too long wait between bands. It took about three songs for most of us to warm back up. The band seemed to know a dozen people up front, which was good for the fans, but sort of a bore for us who didn't get all the inside jokes. **Kay Hanley** bounced around like one of those pep rally girls in high school. With her new red hair and the way she sings, I can't help but laugh when I think how much she resembles **Ann Margaret** in ***Bye Bye Birdie***. The band is really into big, hollow-body Gibson guitars. I have to admit their drummer, **Stacy Jones**, was quite excellent, reminding me of a young **Paul Cook;** high energy, good showmanship and lot of splash cymbals. They pretty much played their second album in the same order as on the CD. People started really getting into them by "Awake." They cooked all the way to "Here And Now," where they pulled up a pink, punk-haired Asian girl to sing beside **Kay**. I think pink hair is in a local band (**27 Moms**???) and was impressed that she could keep up with **Kay** in the fast-as-you-can-sing part of "Here And Now." Most of the people in the audience were lip-synching all of the songs throughout the evening, so they obviously have dedicated fans in Detroit. They played a three song encore, including a cool surf sound version of a **Nancy Sinatra** song, "Last Secret Agent In East Berlin." They closed with the "cock-rock" "Rimshack" as **Kay** called it, grabbing her crotch and giggling. **Letters To Cleo** played about 75 minutes of material total. A great night for drummers; it's nice to hear the return of cymbalogy. **Allen Salyer.**

J. MASCIS

blind pig ann arbor 9/28/95

J. MASCIS

On this day, I had a memorable experience. I got to see one of my "heroes." No, not a member of the **X-Men**, **Superman** or **Eddie Vedder** (ha ha), but **Dinosaur Jr.** frontman **J. Mascis.** I was blown away. He did cool renditions of the **SMITHS'** "A Boy With A Thorn In His Side," a **Wipers'** tune and a song by **Ketchup**. He also played some of my faves, "Thumb," "Blowing It" and "Water" (from **Dinosaur Jr.'s** ***Green Mind*** album), as well as songs from the first **Dinosaur Jr.** LP (simply titled ***Dinosaur***). The only thing that hindered the evening was the crowd. I was really surprised that **Mascis** didn't walk off the stage from the beginning. People were insensitive, yelling comments like, "play some **Sebadoh**" or please play my favorite song" or "**Quicksand**!" and "just let him play!" I think they should have treated him with a little more respect and not like a "rock star." I wished it could have been more personal. There were about 300 people in the Pig. I think most went because "Hey, isn't that the guy from **Dinosaur Jr**.? Let's round up the gang, go watch the show and be jerks." I don't mean to cut people down, but every show I've seen at the **Blind Pig** has been the same way -- a little disappointing (it was really bad when **Steel Pole Bathtub** played there). I'm thankful that I was able to see him perform...So, if he comes back, enjoy the show and let him perform in his own way. ***Coley Dennis*** (with **Shawn Wernette**).

MIKE WATT SIX FINGER SATELLITE

reptile house grand rapids 10/2/95

At a **Mike Watt** show, one never really knows what to expect from an opening band. In a musical casserole of devonoise and surfbilly, **Six Finger Satellite** pounded out an earsplitting hour of p-rock tunage that left most people picking their jaws up from their shoes. Some hard-core **Watt** fans disapproved. Most people went on drinking their beers.

I took a step outside between bands just in time to watch the mighty emerge, rumpled and wrinkled, from the tour van. As he ambled into the bar, I heard someone say, "He looks older than he used to..." The statement brought a nervous bout of laughter from the rest of the sidewalk crowd. It's true. He's a little older; a little grayer; and a little more shaky when he stands, but no one could ever say that when he hits the stage.

Under the lights and behind the PA speakers, **Mike** commands the same respect from the crew of the flying saucer that a chitlin' circuit R&B band leader might have expected 30 years ago. With everyone poised intimately on the edge of the stage, **Watt** barked a few orders at the sound man, launched into a **firehose** opener, "Formal Introduction," and made it immediately clear that he intended to take both the audience and his prize winning of sparring partners on a saucer ride of his own.

The set included at least half of **Watt's *Ball Hog or Tug Boat?*** album, highlighted in particular by the dynamically intense "Drove Up From Pedro" and "Last Night." "One Reporter's Opinion," the ***Ball Hog*** version, and "Political Song for Michael Jackson to Sing" (dedicated to **Kira**) formed the lone pair of **minutemen** tunes performed for the evening. **Watt** and crew also put the screws to long time live standards, "Makin' the Freeway" and the **B.O.C.** cover, "The Red and the Black."

No show proclaiming **Mike Watt** ever ends without a serious encore, and this was no exception. Until this point in the show I tried to maintain my journalistic objectivity, but I'm sorry, when **Mike Watt** launches into the opening notes of "Maggot Brain," you've just gotta sit back and enjoy yourself. The rest of the band left the stage as **Mike** and his guitarist wrestled the jam to its knees, and soon only the world's number one p-rock bass player was left standing. He performed an emotionally charged solo version of "Powerful Hankerin'" and left the stage with a final salute of, "Start yer own band!"

I don't think I've missed a show that featured **Mike Watt** since about 1989. And yes, he has gotten a little older, a little grayer and a little more shaky when he stands, but to see him up there tearing up the thunder broom again made me realize that in this crazy upside-down world of post-punk mayhem, everything is going to be all right. **Eric Sikkema**.

DAVID BOWIE NINE INCH NAILS PRICK

the palace auburn hills 10/3/95

Prick opened the show promptly and loudly at 7:30pm performing their type of neo-new wave-industrial noise that is very catchy and dissonant. Although short, it was a hard-hitting set that you don't see much with many opening acts. **Kevin McMahon**, the lead singer, brought the crowd (that was there) to their feet.

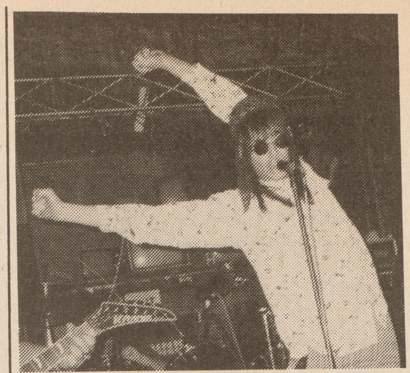
Nine Inch Nails doesn't go out to play a show anymore, they go out to annihilate you with noise. **Trent**, intense as ever, grasped the microphone like a life preserver, singing the songs like they were his last words. A lot of people I know slam **Trent** for how popular he is, but it's not like his music isn't challenging, sometimes it can be damn near unbearable, but always interesting. They performed material from ***The Downward Spiral*** and did some interesting things with their material from ***Pretty Hate Machine.*** Highlights included a fierce "March of the Pigs," a very unique (and better) "Closer" and the stripped-down, "Down On It."

The best part of the evening, was the interlude, where a long, dark, somber instrumental was played. **Trent** even played saxophone. Then, with **Nine Inch Nails** still on stage, the **"Thin White Duke"** (**David Bowie**) approached the microphone and showed the crowd what real charisma is all about. Their version of "Scary Monsters" revealed a new freshness and energy with **Bowie.** Standing next to Trent, it was like they were both rubbing off on each other, which also brought about the friction of the show. After the assault by **Nine Inch Nails,** it would have been refreshing to see **Bowie** slow the pace down and capture the audience with his voice instead of trying to prove to the audience that, he, too, can play harsh and abrasive music. The majority of the audience was a younger crowd that was just there to see **Nine Inch Nails**. I noticed several people leave during **Bowie's** set, probably not wanting to miss their curfew. **Bowie** played a short, 70 minute set, performing most of his material from his new album, ***Outside***. **David** surprised the audience by only playing a few of his older and more obscure songs, including "Look Back In Anger," "Andy Warhol" and "Joe the Lion." **Bowie** also played "The Man Who Sold the World," reminding the audience that it was his song to begin with. Ending the show abruptly and without an encore, **David** resigned himself to playing second fiddle to his unintentional Goliath, **Nine Inch Nails. Mike Pfeiffer.**

THE DICKIES D GENERATION KING TAMMY

reptile house grand rapids 10/5/95

It was good to see **King Tammy** again and this time on a big stage with a real PA. Their brand of quirky comic rock puts a band like **The Dead Milkmen** in perspective (i.e. bad punk rock). When **D Generation** stormed the stage I thought I had been sucked away in a time machine to 1977 again. Comparisons to the **New York Dolls**, **Johnny Thunders** and **The Dead Boys** would not be too far off the mark. I'm talkin' bout (not so) young, loud and snotty. The look, the feel and the sound were all in order (time check: NO TATOOS). I, for one, thoroughly enjoyed myself in this little time warp and even though I never was actually treated to a live performance by any of those aforementioned originals I think everyone at the gig found something to relate to in this band.


LEONARD GRAVES PHILLIPS

THE DICKIES

JESSE MALIN

D GENERATION

Dickies, **Dickies** and more **Dickies**! That's all I have to say. **Leonard Graves Phillips** is a true showman. As well he should be after some 18 years of experience as the frontman for the band. Blazing through their hits like "this one we wrote for the **Moody Blues**" ("Nights in White Satin") "You Drive Me Ape (You Big Gorilla)" and "Manny, Moe, and John F. Kennedy" were definitely crowd pleasers. The **Dickies**' sound remains the **Dickies'** sound. Loud, fast rock with Leonard's high vibrato voice that has become the **Dickies** trademark. Ominously absent, however, was the sound of any keyboards. I don't think they've ever replaced **Chuck Wagon** after his unfortunate death. The two original members (**Leonard** and **Stan Lee** on guitar) continue as the **Dickies** driving force (the other new lads appear to be very young). And it's a force to be had. I almost fell down in worship at **Leonard's** feet, I was so doggone thrilled. His masterful use of puppets is just as entertaining to the crowd as it is to the band. His best line of the night was " I was hanging out with the singer from **Blind Melon** not too long ago - what a lightweight!" Coming back on-stage for an encore I was about to yell *"Danger Island!"* when they kicked into my fave "The Banana Splits Theme Song". Whew, what a rockin' night. I left feeling totally fulfilled. **Harry K. Hairy.**

TRAILERPARK the MASONS HARLEQUIN DAY 28 FUNKSHYBRID

house party east lansing 10/21/95

The band line-up for the semi-annual all-membership party of E. Lansing Co-opers was most excellently recruited by **Hedrick House** member **Miss Jeanine Toth**. Openers **Funkshybrid** played a confident debut set; nice guitar work and a **Dead** cover to boot. Next up were **Day 28**, who until their set, I had never heard, nor ever expected greatness from. Yet, I received. Forget the politics for a moment and ask why these folks aren't rock stars. Is it 'cause they're girls? Is it 'cause I was wasted? Not sure, but consider me rocked, with an extra headbang for the **Skynyrd** cover. Just when I thought I could be rocked no longer, **Harlequin** took me on a two-hour improvisational space trip guaranteed to delight any peace-loving E. Lansing hippie. **The Masons** followed suit soon afterwards. Taken together, **The Masons** and **Harlequin** may represent a future for Michigan college town jam bands. Not that there is a shortage of bands in this genre, **The Masons** and **Harlequin** just happen to be better than most. Both bands show talent at all positions, and, **The Masons**, quite a knack for stage decoration. Here's a nod, a wink and a toast to more **Mason's** and **Harlequin** shows together. The four gorgeous members of local pop sensations **Trailerpark** had their constitutional rights collectively trampled by the E. Lansing Police Department, two, three songs into their set. Advice to **Trailerpark** members: Make like **Milli Vanilli**, and blame it on the rain. **D. Carlson**.

SAN FRANCISCO SEALS CHRIS KNOX

seventh house pontiac 10/21/95

Supposedly, alternative music is really big these days, that's what everybody keeps telling me. Especially the college rock/indie scene, where bands are playing low-key melodies with intelligent lyrics. So when I left on Saturday to check out two of indie's finest, the **San Francisco Seals** and the eccentric, one man band, **Chris Knox**, I expected to find a seat near the back or, hopefully, a spot in the middle would be left. I was really surprised when I found I had the pick of the house, no one had shown up. A lot of shows start late, so I took a seat and waited for others to arrive. **Chris Knox** was the first to show, as he stumbled in with his equipment, grinning and apologizing about his late arrival and adding that he would be quick in setting up. The crowd should have started rolling in any second, and they did, all 10 of them. In front of this small, but appreciative audience, **Knox** performed a warm, funny and occasionally embarrassing set as he urged the crowd to join along. All his songs were performed with a drum machine, guitar and **Knox's** voice, bantering and stammering about love and the mysteries of life. During the last song of his set, he was joined on stage by the **San Francisco Seals**, who jammed along with him in a frenzied, noisy exaltation of feedback. By now, 30 of us were there and getting more than our money's worth. **Barbara Manning**, the lead singer and focal point of the **Seals**, strummed her guitar and sang wistfully to indie rock with a Western twist. For the short set up, the **Seals** had a great sound. At the end of the show it was good to see that alternative music is, indeed, alive and well even if nobody else is noticing. **Mike Pfeiffer.**

Hoarse Watershed Feisty Cadavers X-Posers

the foundry detroit 10/21/95

Okie-dokie -- I caught the first band but I didn't catch their name, so that ought to give you a pretty good idea as to what I thought of their performance...**X-Posers**--**Speck** told me they were pretty cool, and I had high hopes, then they played and played and, well (yawn), you get the idea. **Feisty Cadavers**--These p-rock geezers have been raisin' Cain for many moons, and you know what? They crank out the old-school aggro like nobody's business. These gents may be grizzled, and may sound dated blah blah blah, but they got a sound that's just as refreshing and vital today as it was lo those many years ago. Aces! **Watershed**--Surprise of the night (month?)! Power pop smoothness with hooks aplenty and numbers so catchy that you'll find yourself hummin' 'em for days afterwards. A very good live band that gives you your money's worth. Super cool. **Hoarse** -- What can I say? They're the real deal. They will be HUGE and they deserve it. Good Joes-exceptional musicians - they warrant your undivided attention and support. I'm not gonna begin to try to start crankin' out the adjectives - take my word - they RAWK! **n. bates.**

SPECK

HOARSE

RANCID LUNACHICKS SKALORS

state theater detroit 10/22/95

I only got to see one or two **Skalors'** numbers. I wasn't impressed, but my attention wasn't fully placed where maybe it should have been. How could I help it? My girls, the **Lunachicks**, were about to play and I was too hyped. **Theo** (vocals) is a goddess to me, and to see them again was my highlight. They came out caked with make-up, tattoos and all that attitude that makes my blood pump five times faster. They rock me in a silly way. Anyway, everybody else's feature, **Rancid**, stepped out quite finely, and I enjoyed them a great deal. They seemed to cover all the favorites. I was jumping. As far as all this new 90's punk stuff, I think these guys are up in the tops. They know what they're doing, they've been around. Give 'em props. at least, eh? **Mazzola**.

ELECTRIC HELLFIRE CLUB URANIUM 235 HERO PIG BIG BLUE COUCH

small planet east lansing 10/24/95

Got there too late to catch the warm ups, **Big Blue Couch** and **Hero Pig**, but heard they smoked the joint. **Uranium 235**--they're like the **Mets**: they're from New York and they stink. And what's with the quasi-**Marilyn Manson** make-up hoo-haw and faggoty clothes? It wouldn't have bothered me - nor would the hour it took 'em to set up - if they would've put up the goods, but these hacks? Avoid. So Satan's minions, **EHC**, finally get set to go and guess what? They played a whole 15 minutes thanks to a misunderstanding between the band and the **Small P.** Needless to say, we were treated to four tunes, including their killer cover of **John Carpenter's** "Halloween Theme." Singer **Thomas Thorn** gets points for the chutzpah he showed in lambasting the whole fiasco. I don't buy any of their Devil worship baloney, but they won me over to their tunes in their all-to-brief appearance.

n. bates.

WESTON DOC HOPPER CONSTATINE SANKATHI

the comet cafe kalamazoo 10/25/95

Two days after the show, I exchanged "hello's" with **Constatine Sankathi's** singer who also blows a mean harp and trombone for his rock band. The typical fan to rocker banter was exchanged.

"You guys were great the other night, man," I babbled. "You guys are the rock."

"Thanks, but we're not rock," he replied.

"What?"

"I'm just joking."

His last comment came about as a means to diffuse somebody who was taken back by his remark concerning the band's music.

"What the fuck," I said to myself. "What the hell are they then? It's all rock-n-roll."

But once that thought dribbled across my synapses, I realized my position floated somewhere in between a rock-n-roll documentary interview and a rock-n-roll Hall of Fame induction speech. "Bombs away of the rock-n-roll hall of fame," **Ron House** said. How the hell can a 90's hard-core band relate to **.38 Special** and Kellogg Arena. Rock-n-roll has bred one too many bands that write songs referring to themselves as the "daddy" and their girlfriend as the "little girl" or some crap. Is **Constatine** a bunch of wimps and wussys because they are not all screwed in the head over drugs and chicks? Hell no. The pain of losing friends and shit is just as legit as incest or any other reason to make some kid strap a guitar around his shoulder. When the amps are flipped on they are proven to be legit excuses to make some loud annoying noises. Many, many noises. In fact, these guys are so distraught with a world turning shittier by the day, they can't focus on any one style or sound to explore, which works out in the end. **Constatine** live show was an overwhelming assault that decimated rock-n-roll and left it floating in the East River along with **"Fat" Andy Salerno**.

When **Constatine's** lead singer pried himself off the tiles, **Doc Hopper** took the stage and played music that begged the question, "Who the hell booked these two bands on the same bill?" C'mon, what the hell is **Doc Hopper**? Pop band? Punk band? Metal band? you guessed it: a well-crafted amalgamation of all three. Sure it was tight. Sure it was dead on. Sure it was something more aligned with the self-absorbed arpeggios performed by **Racer X**, featuring **Tony MacAlpine**. Pop-punk, like metal (save **Kyuss**), has reached a stage of "Add water and presto." A band does a little of this, does a little of that, and then between songs spits out a witty comment. **Doc Hopper's** incessant "this song is about your mom" quip filled this void. It's boring and not cute anymore. Somebody give me a handkerchief to wipe my brow.

The whole house of cards came tumbling down at midnight. Nah, maybe a little earlier. Remember, this was an all ages show. But this didn't stop musical whores the likes of **Weston** from adorning instruments and playing nonetheless. **Weston**: four guys really in love with pop-punk who really don't care to play or sing one note in tune. But, yes sir, this is what the hordes of teenyboppers wanted. The house was packed, and **Weston** made the walls sweat bullets, I say, bullets. Unlike **Doc Hopper**, **Weston** is aware of the pitfalls preventing a bunch of horny nerd balls (the guitar player stage right was a genuine clone of **Jeff Goldblum**) from doing anything endearing to the wastoids of America in the same manner as the **Descendants**. It was their mission to demoralize pop-punk and to render themselves obsolete in the process. That's what made them so vital. **Weston's** music and attitude rose up from the decline of pop-punk as we know it today. Yes, I have seen the non-future of punk rock and its name is **Weston**. **Justin Farrar.**

PENNYWISE JOYKILLER 88 FINGERS LOUIE

st. andrew's detroit 10/28/95

88 Fingers Louie were all right. The sad thing about it was that my favorite parts were the **Sick Of It All** and **Gorilla Bisquits** covers they did. That rocked, but they weren't hard songs to cover and they didn't do anything special with them. Hey -- anyway it got us slamming. Their own stuff seemed kinda generic (hard-core). Not too much special. I didn't dig **Joykiller** too much either. I thought they were just kinda silly. I guess I don't really have anything intelligent to say about them. I just wasn't hip to it. Part of this may have been my anxiety about the time. **Gwar** was playing over at Harpo's and I didn't want to miss any of that. Finally, **Pennywise** came out. It's been a while since I had this much fun. It was a fine mix of both new and old material and they were tight as hell. They closed with the all time favorite bro. hymn. Left everybody feeling good and satisfied. The show gave me a much better appreciation for the new record also. Watch out for **Pennywise**, they're tops. This one was very worth it, as was the last one. I would put a guarantee on the next one being just as much fun, so check it out. **Mazzola.**

GWAR NEUROSIS BRUTAL JUICE

harpo's detroit 10/28/95

I'm pissed that I didn't know about the **Brutal Juice** set earlier in the evening over at the Old Miami, I found out about it later from bass player **Sam McCall**. It's hard to keep up when you're stuck in pitiful Lansing, a situation that I've vowed to rectify by naming it my New Year's resolution. This Denton, TX gang have become one of my most favored, kicking up a maelstrom of nonsense every time they stroll through the area. This set wasn't nearly as manic as their set last summer, but it still rocked (or should I say jerked) back and forth a la vocalist **Craig Welch**. "The Vaginals," "Nationwide," "Kathy Rigby," ...these are the songs that all the kids oughta listen to. Something tells me this band is going to get a lot bigger.

Oakland, CA's **Neurosis** hit the stage with their politically charged grindcore. Having seen them previously, I was ready for their no-holds-barred attack and multi-media stage presentation. I don't think that any of the East Side burnouts were ready for the harsh reality that **Neurosis** pushes on its audience vis-à-vis films and slides that are part of their performance. The band also used multiple percussionists in dramatic fashion. They, in short, put on one helluva show.

When **GWAR** comes to town every year around Halloween, it is always one of the biggest nights of the year for me. This year I raced straight over from the **Pennywise** show with hopes that I hadn't missed a thing. Too bad I missed **Brutal Juice** -- they rule. Everyone rush out right now and buy their album. I did make it in time to catch the costume contest. Woo-woo. I don't know if this kind of thing fits with a **Gwar** show (mind you it was a sexy costume contest), but it does certainly go hand-in-hand with the **Harpo's** atmosphere. Cheesy but entertaining. Anyway, the event was finally at hand and I'm sorry to say that **Gwar** did not live up to expectations. Every year the show has gotten bigger, bloodier and gutsier. Not this year. If you were a first time **Gwar** participator, you probably still should have been impressed. After all, I still hold it to be the greatest show on earth, right above the circus. But my shirt from last year was caked with a lot more shit. I got

'em all hanging on my nail, and it just doesn't hold up. Plus I don't know where a lot of those songs came from. I've got ***Rag Na Rok*** and that's not it. I don't know. I was let down this time. Still great and, no doubt, I'll be there next time.
D. Wood-n. bates-Mazzola.

UNIVERSAL INDIANS

Dead Clown Pile Karp Universal Indians

new society community center lansing 10/30/95

You know what is upsetting? The fact that a national act can come to town on Devil's Night, an act that toured the U.S. with **Beck**, who may or may not be of questionable music quality, and play to 25 people. The show opened with the **Universal Indians**, who are East Lansing's offering to the "twang-core" style of music. With a definite influence from the **Blues Explosion**, the **Indians** two guitar-style of loud, punk attitude blues rock, was impressive to witness at such a beginning level. Check out their 12".

Next up was **Karp**, who came all the way out from Washington state, to play in front of 25 people at a community center. Perhaps it would have helped if the promoter would have done some flyering or called the local radio station or print media to get press! But regardless of this setback, this trio of 21 and unders put on an amazing show of D.I.Y. punk-style tunes. They only played for about 45 minutes, but put forth 110% the entire performance. **Karp's** frontman, who you'll have to excuse me for forgetting his name, had purchased a new bass amp the previous night in Detroit, and was having difficulty with its performance, as it was constantly shorting out. Mid-way through their third song he thrust his bass into the amp destroying it and also removing the G-string peg from his bass. **Karp** ended their set with an impromptu jam, while the bassless frontman stood on top of his amp, screaming at the 25 people in attendance. It was good to see an independent act play for so few people and still put on a spectacular performance and have a good time. **Karp** is out on a 44 day tour performing 42 shows. If they come back around, go see them. Listen with your ears, damn it!

The show concluded with East Lansing's **Dead Clown Pile**, a three piece punk outfit featuring **Sean "Pooh" Lyons**, **Brett Pickett** and **Ed McEachren**. These three silly characters spewed forth a full half hour of quick moving hard-core punk. You gotta love it. I must also send forth my best regards to **Pooh**, as he is the Phatest bass player I have seen in quite some time. As the final song began, **Dale Dixon**, vocalist for **60 Cycle Humm**, got up and offered a full-on vocal performance. The song ended as **Brett**, the guitar player, came diving across the room and into the drums, which acted as a catalyst for the band to destroy the drum equipment. Hell, I even got up and kicked a floor tom. All this to an audience of 10 people. Music is about fun, keep it that way! **Dead Clown Pile** is definitely one of the tightest bands I have seen in Michigan since before, even, **Mork** and **Mindy** got canceled. Tip top from hip pop of E.L., it's the **D.C.P.** bitch! Check out **Pooh's** side project, **The Verde Messhuganahs**. **David J. Ciancio.**

Hoarse Chinese Millionaires Sea Monsters

rockhouse lansing 11/1/95

Two things to look for when you go see a band: One, are they having fun? And two, are they for real? I found two more examples of bands that fit this description. Unfortunately for the **Sea Monsters**, that just didn't come across. I'm not coming down on them, but they don't quite have it together yet. It's like one of those plastic prizes in a cereal box before it gets assembled. You know all the pieces are there, but it isn't very useful in its current state.

The **Chinese Millionaires**, from East Lansing and Grand Rapids, who I understand have been together for only a few months, with members from the **Actionaries** and **El Smasho**, put on the kind of show that a territorial music junkie like myself can really appreciate. The **Millionaires** are a torchcore, punk, aggressive display of everything that made the 50's and 60's cool with a large chunk of New York, in-your-face, don't come here unless you belong attitude. It was great. With no song longer than three minutes, this foursome put forth a very highly energetic, fun performance in a town where this style is vastly underrepresented. Thanks guys.

Up next, **HOARSE**, who only added another scoop and more whipped cream onto the attitude, fun-loving musical banana split of the night. The Detroit trio were on fire and, oh boy, was **Speck's** butt-a-burnin' as they played an extremely tight, aggressive, ludicrously enjoyable set. If you haven't gotten out yet to witness the magic before corporate America will, DO IT NOW!!! "I dat gar-uhn-teee!" that one day **HOARSE** will be a household name. Not only is each member entirely talented and original, but they also love what they do and have a good time doing it. Just remember that if you go see them, bring **Mr. Robby Doom** some American cheese singles and tell 'em "D.C. sent ya!" There is a reason why you should support your local music scene. For everything you give it, it will give you back twice as much. **David J. Ciancio**.

The Mighty Mighty Bosstones Hagfish Alligator Gun

st. andrew's detroit 11/4/95

WARNING! YOU ARE ABOUT TO READ A BIASED REVIEW!!!
I cannot tell a lie, the **Mighty Mighty** fellows from the town where the harbor tastes like Lipton and everyone wears green, are my favorite band in existence. I see them religiously every time they come to town. But before we get to the heralded ones, I must say that **Alligator Gun** was only semi-interesting, as it seems that neo-pop-aggressive-happy-we wish we could make as much money as **Green Day**-punkwannabe-bands are popping up all over like Orville Redenbacker's popcorn, but these guys were a little less poppy, that's all. **Hagfish**, whom I saw open for the **Reverend Horton Heat**, did not seem to be pleased with the fact that not every single person in the Hall was dancing to their music. So, of course, they began to cajole the crowd. Now I don't know what school of thought you come from, but to me I tend to dislike a band even more when they tell me and my city where to stick it. Their childish sexual references were about as interesting as solar cooking poached eggs on a homemade **Pringle** can solar cooker.

Aside from all of that, I do appreciate the **Bosstones** bringing different bands to expose people to. That is the way the industry should work. Here is the story: If you haven't ever seen the **Bosstones**, they are the traveling 8th wonder of the Universe. I have never seen a bad **Bosstones** performance. But then again, I did not go to **Lollapalooza**, which frontman **Dicky Barret** adamantly apologized for several times. So instead of telling you how stellar of an experience I had at the show, here's the set list for all you freaky-freakies that either can't remember what happened or if you missed the show: "We Should Talk," "He's Back," "Kinder Words," "Royal Oil," "Howwhywuz Howwhyam," "Hell of a Hat," "Where'd You Go," "12 8 9(new song)," "Holy Smoke," "Devil's Night Out," "Stand Off," "Someday I Suppose," "Think Again (yes!! Threat!!)," "Simmer Down," "Illegal Left," "Drunks & Children," "Hope I Never Lose My Wallet," "Dr. D." Then they played three encores consisting of: "Our Only Weapon," "A Little Bit Ugly (St. Andrew's wouldn't allow people on the stage, it sucked)" "Haji," "Awfully Quiet" and in tribute to another Boston band, "Sweet Emotion" (snaps to the **St. Andy's** crew for the set list). The **Mighty Mighty** crew were even cool enough to dedicate a song to everyone's favorite ska band, **Mustard Plug**. In closing, the only ones to steal the stage from a barrel of monkeys, it's the **Mighty Mighty Mighty** (they deserve another) **Bosstones**. **David J. Ciancio.**

SUPERCHUNK SEAWEED

st. andrew's detroit 11/5/95

I know what you're thinking. So what! **Superchunk** are old news! Their star faded a long time ago...yeah right! And **Seaweed** should have been headlining this show. Here is where the violins come in. We missed the first two bands (see sad puppy paintings). By the time we got to the show, the most beautiful girl in the world was up on stage tuning her bass. It was **Laura**! The rest of the band took the stage and dished out treats from their new album, followed with "Seed Toss" from ***No Pocky For Kitty***. **Laura** was gorgeous (see glitter kitten sticker on bass) and full of energy. **Superchunk** were "hyper enough," but the crowd was only half awake. A mixed one it was - some die hard fans and a lot of kids who were there 'cause they saw 'em on **MTV**. **Superchunk** is big kid rock! **Jim** could've played with his eyes shut, and a couple of times he nearly dropped his guitar. He complained about ***Orbit*** magazine and a comment made by one of their writers that **Seaweed** was better than **Superchunk**. *"We don't smoke pot,"* **Jim** continued to slag **Seaweed**, *"so I guess we're not cool."* They spent the rest of the night putting everything they had into "Detroit" and finally got some action when they blasted into "Punch Me Harder," **Mac's** voice is better than ever and, just as they were getting ready to play one last song, members of **Seaweed** made off with their guitars. **Superchunk** can take it. They got the last laugh and **Seaweed** are a joke. **Shawn Wernette**.

Trusty The Dismemberment Plan Doxie I Against

the comet cafe kalamazoo 11/6/95

What the hell happened on that rainy night is still beyond me, a helpless snort of drivel. Damn them all. Things got ugly, real ugly. Watch out Altamont. Watch out **The Who** in Cincinnati, sometime in their "Join Together" phase with a partially deaf **Townsend** already emerging.

The opening group, **I Against**, seems to have faired pretty well in my sketchy memory. More for the fact that they ended up outpunking their already self-righteous punk stance without even knowing it. Points in my book. They were rollicking up a storm. Every song, baby: 1-2-3-4-music, 1-2-3-4-music. Stop! they broke the mold about 3/4 of the way in with a sneering comment: "It's real funny to joke around and say words like 'fag' and 'bitch.' But you're a fuckin' hypocrite when it comes down to it." Me, a hypocrite? Nah. I'm just grazing in the pastures of the lord making merry with all sexes and sexual prefer-

EVERETT

I AGAINST

ences. Never mind my first book due out How I Loved the 100 Most Beautiful LA Coke Bitches of All Time: The Life and Times of Morgan Fairchild. It's damn gripping and will come out in paperback, too. **I Against** was loud, obnoxious and really bad. They will probably out punk themselves during their next show in Kalamazoo by calling me out on their shit: "This is for the kid, this **Justin Ferrrer**, who reviewed our last show. If you don't like what we are about then fuck you, man. I hope you can live with yerself sayin' shit like 'fag' and 'bitch.' 1-2-3-4." All the ingredients to one day make a great punk band. These are traits the last band **Trusty** lost all touch with. See, this band was Vegas bound, pure **Dischord** Oldies Tour. Which is an idea **Ian** should start considering real soon. It would give him a chance to unload all those **Gray Matter** LPs collecting dust in our nation's capital. **Trusty** is now fully loaded with "yeahs," "oohs" and "ahs." They jumped about in a pseudo **Squeeze** on crystal meth fashion completely free of the "Paul" years. It proved to give an old band a new lease on life. Pure prostitution.

Doxie with **Hot Licks Halsey** on lead, took the stage after the whole **I Against** debacle. For a crowd that now numbered eight instead of six, **Doxie** really played two sets instead of one, which everyone else thought they played. The first was sluggish, but the second was upbeat and toe-tapping. The division of the two was some kid who screamed, "I love your guitar licks..." **Halsey** replied with, "You are pretty lucky. It's rare I bring those out." One hint "**Hot Licks**": hang out with **I Against** for a weekend. Smelt some steel, crack some whips and you'll come back hotter than ever, a modern day **Maybelle Carter**. Then, the whole set will be a steamer.

Most of this shit was easy, fun stuff for fun people. But **Dismemberment Plan** were genuine weirdoes. The way **Captain Beefheart** is a weirdo, the way the **Talking Heads** were weirdoes and the way **Thinking Fellers Union Local 282** are weirdoes. Before they played third, for no apparent reason, I told about 19 people in the joint that this band would suck balls, big ones. It must have gotten back to them; it seemed like only 22 people showed up for the whole thing. 20 of which fled once **Dismemberment Plan** did the deed. Many bands have had quirky members, but the groups already mentioned successfully reflect their neurotic and psychotic tendencies with music most people just as soon puke to. The **Dismemberment Plan's** singer chirped out, "I got everything I ever wanted just by acting insane" and "One day I took a Chevrolet down the Amazon river." One line nonsensical, due to a funk influence of choosing words for their sound rather than meaning, one line indicative of this bunch of corduroy pants wearing, rich kids from Washington DC who want to play a style of black music even though they ingested one too many suburban uptight and white pills. Some bizarre hybrid came out of it, funkier than the **Talking Heads**, but never, ever funkier than those get down **Mary Jane Girls**.

Maybe that night didn't end in an abdominal scene where the physically fit teenagers trampled upon the weak ones to get a glance of **Saltry Daltry** wiggling his hips in tight slacks screaming, "See Me, Feel Me, Touch Me." **Justin Farrar**.

BOSS HOG DEMOLITION DOLL RODS

st. andrew's detroit 11/12/95

Adorned in only playing cards and g-strings, the **Rods** delivered another rock-n-roll sleazefest to a half-surprised, half-delighted crowd. Ex-**Gorie**, **Dan Kroha**, cavorted about the stage in pure **Bowie-Reed** "Rock Animal **Iggy**-esque" style, happy to oblige the crowd with intimate views of his gyrating rear end. The **Rods'** simple, dual guitar and minimalist, tribal drum sound is the perfect palette for such rumping showmanship. Between screechin' fave "Psychokitty" and the final noise hodgepodge of an encore came a hot rendition of the **Runaways**' "Little Sister" done in sleaze style reminiscent of the festerings of the late 70's glam scene. The **Rods'** infantile rockmanship evokes a hearty giggle and healthy hard-on from the audience as they strain to catch a closer peek at their half-naked novelty. The bent-over-to-please-you finale closed with **Dan** riding his instrument toward the proverbial sunset, while **Margaret** masturbated her guitar towards amp-land. Thank God she had the sense to wear a helmet. Whatever the damage, the **Rods** left the crowd properly primed for **Boss Hog's** blue-balled rock contortions. As if **Ms. Martinez's** thigh slapping and evil whispered vocals weren't enough to keep one mesmerized, **Jon's** usual whiny and galloping guitar licks played the public's pelvis just as well. Hot **Hohner** organ action throughout the set to match the glorious tone on the recent album, especially interesting use to cover **Ike Turner's** "I Idolize You." The most recent **BH** line-up (formed for 1993's ***Girl+*** EP) came together after a revolving door type stint with people between releasing ***Drinkin', Letchin' & Lyin'*** (1989) and ***Cold Hands*** (1990). **Hollis Queens** on drums and **Jens Jourgensen** as bass player, in addition to **Cristina** and hub **Jon**, combine the twisted hipness of the **Spencer-Blues** creation with a hard-assed sensuality on their latest self-titled release (**DGC**). More than just noise rock and the typical blues licks, **Boss Hog** strips the rock animal down to its barest bones while inhibiting all in earshot to grind to their groove. **Surdu.**

PRIMUS

fox theater detroit 11/12/95

These guys don't fail. You pretty much know what you're going to get when you go to see them, and you know it's gonna be good. Just to watch them play that stuff is good enough for me. Top quality musicians, quirkiness in gallons and **Les Claypool**. There's nothing like it, plus they jam it out. My only complaint was that they skipped a couple of my favorite songs, but there's so many. It was a good mix. We all dug it. **Mazzola.**

SUN BROTHER KGB PRODUCTION GREY CIRCUS OF SOULS KUNG FU DIESEL

bumpers jackson 11/12/95

I hot-rodded my way down a thick sheet of ice some call "Michigan Ave." to a bar called Bumpers. I heard this place was a dive, and was known for attracting some of the finest examples of white trash, but to my surprise, I was welcomed by a friendly crowd that was ready to rock.

Missed **Kung Fu Diesel**, but was told that they kicked off the "battle" with their clean rockin' **Beatle**-esque ditties. I got there in time to catch **Circus Of Souls**. These guys looked like **Hell's Angels** and sounded like "Stairway to Heaven." Powerful melodies backed with classical guitar picking and trippy keyboards that sounded more like a pipe organ. Seeing **Circus Of Souls** definitely made up for missing this year's big **Foghat** show. Good stuff!

Three shots later, I thought I heard somebody say "*sea slugs*," but since I play gee-tar for a band with a similar name...giving 'em a review would be dang blasted stupid!

So next up to battle were **Production Grey** and I could tell by the looks of things, there would be bloodshed. These guys go through band members like most groups go through guitar strings. Screamer # 3 executed each song off of ***Immortal*** dead on, although his voice is much lower than their second singer. One skull crushin' death riff after another was belted out with new blood and they played new songs from their new CD ***Channel Your Aggression***. They ranted about Bible stories and brought up the word "**Satan**," which a local Jackson print shop refused to print in their lyric booklet. **Mr. Tim Sever** tore his drum set up, as usual, as they ended with the old favorite "I Am Man." **Sever** is an incredible drummer, and somehow managed to play just as quick and precise on each song despite havin' a coffin nail hangin' from his trap. Brutal!

The secret is out in Jackson. **KGB's Brendan** (ex-guitar for **Psychotic Therapy**) and **Johnny Baird** (ex-**Parker**, **Moon Tribe**) have combined years of experience to create chaotic and ever-changing rhythms in each and every song. **KGB** were a surprise attack of aggressive (and progressive) metal fusion funk straight out of a girlie movie.

Sun Brother wrapped up the night with their explosive set of blues. Like a dark and dreary version of "LA Woman," **Andy's** voice had every lady in the joint swayin' and gyratin' just like he did with the mic stand. Wow!

I'm not sure who the winner was in this battle of the bands, but I'm glad to see so much support from the bands and audience alike. **Tiffany Towers** would be jealous.

Bumpers might not be the biggest place in the world, but it's one of the few places left in Jackson that will let rock bands play their own stuff. Rock on Jackson! **Shawn Wernette.**

SMOKEY WILSON

rhythm kitchen cafe grand rapids 11/17/95

Beautiful place, the Rhythm Kitchen Cafe. Good food, nice wide-open feel to it, reasonably priced beer. They don't sell hooch and the crowd is maybe a little too trendy for me (they looked like they were in a California Chardonnay commercial), but it's a great venue for blues.

Smokey Wilson's rhythm guitarist warmed the crowd up with a couple of songs before the man himself came out. He (I couldn't get his name) sang well and his guitar solos were pure gold, loose and easy and timed perfectly. **Wilson** came out and blew the house down. He's a big shoutin' mother in a big white cowboy hat. He's derivative of **B.B. King**, but with his own dirty spin on it. The whole rich, white crowd stomped and danced all night. **Wilson** gave them a truly good time.I went home plenty tired, and that's the best sign of a good show. **Scott Joyner**

Ben Harper & The Innocent Criminals Citizen King

erickson kiva (msu) east lansing 11/19/95

First off, let me insist that **Citizen King** suck, and that is why they will probably get famous. As I watched, I played charades in my head. "Sounds like...sounds like...**24-7 Spyz**...sounds like...**Fishbone**." Sounds?!? **Citizen King** has yet to write a lick of their own material; and their way over-rehearsed stage show hasn't got a fraction of the genuine energy displayed by the bands they're ripping off. Though they seem technically adept , it is apparent that the only new ground they will be exploring, artistically, is "how to make money by adhering to a formula?" They're studying this question for their thesis, in fact.

The real talent showed in the person of **Ben Harper**. **Mr. Harper** may take himself too seriously at times (who the fuck doesn't), and he may often seem as preachy as **Oral Roberts**. Still, he has developed an intensely original sound with his folk/funk hybrid. **Harper's** sound was well showcased in a calm two-hour set, in which he left his seat once, maybe twice to switch guitars. Indeed, this guitar switch seemed to inspire the slide guitar rendition of **Hendrix'** "Voodoo Chile," a highlight of the show. Advice to **Ben Harper**: Open a church and save the preaching for Sunday. **D. Carlson**.

MR. BUNGLE MELT BANANA

st. andrew's hall detroit 11/21/95

Whoa! **Melt Banana** was a blast! I've never seen people this small sound so powerful. I think the girl playing the bass is smaller than her bass. For some reason I didn't expect much, probably because I think their name's kinda dumb, but I'm okay with that now. Crunch! Scream! Blast! Very tight. No English! I don't think I'd call them a noise band, but the noise is definitely in there. Very entertaining, almost cute in a bizarre way. They're from Japan, I hope we get them out this way again!

Speaking of bizarre, **Mr. Bungle** came out to play too. Half their set was comprised of songs off their new record. The other half was pretty much jazz improv type stuff. They did "Travolta" which was the only older song, along with what I thought was the most ideal encore I've ever seen, **Loverboy's** "Everybody's Working For The Weekend." They did it total rock style, the way it was originally. My pinkie and index raised straight into the air, as I yelled "Yes! Rock!" along with most of the crowd. At least I think most everybody got it. These guys are note-for-note amazing. If you've heard ***Disco Volante*** -- well, all that stuff is real, not just synthesizers. I love this band, I loved this show, rubber mask, hoods and all. Tight. **Mazzola**.

MARILYN MANSON CLUTCH

st. andrew's hall detroit 11/25/95

This was the second night of a sold out weekend stand, and there was very little advance notice regarding this huge bill for obvious reasons. I heard about it from **Paula** (from the absolutely sensational **Motor Dolls**), and girl...I shall remain grateful 'cause this show was major funtime.

I've seen **Clutch** once before and was very impressed with their overall thickness and initiative. They sure weren't no let down this time either, as they pummeled the gigantic (I mean totally stuffed) crowd with tunes off their latest effort entitled simply, ***Clutch***. Vocalist and crowd lasher, **Neil Fallon**, has a commanding stage presence and he's good for a one-timer now and then, as evidenced by his timely Red Wing comment. The Wings were busy with the New York Rangers over at the Joe, and **Fallon** gave the score before one of the first couple of songs and then said, "But this crowd probably don't care about that stuff." This guy can sure read people 'cause there weren't many hockey fans in attendance.

During the time **Marilyn Manson** were getting set up, they played a tape of some kids choir through the P.A., delighting the crowd with their renditions of "Onward Christian Soldier" and "Jesus Loves Me" and a few others which elicited a lot of crowd response. After a short while the smoke machines filled the place and **MM** appeared, living up to all the hype and then some. **Marilyn** had written "unsafe" across his stomach, something you could almost take for granted as they blasted through songs from their debut LP, ***Portrait of An American Family***, and the new EP, ***Smells Like Children***...You can believe all the hype, **Marilyn Manson** is one of the most intensely negative rock bands selling out concert venues nationwide, do not miss them next time, which hopefully won't be too long from now. The new full-length, ***Antichrist Superstar***, will hit in early '96. **D. Wood.**

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BLUES IN TECHNICOLOR or THE END OF MINSTRELSY?

Richard M. Bowser

I have been watching the **PBS** series on rock'-n-roll this week. I missed the early episodes but came in during the segments about the British Invasion and psychedelic music. An overwhelming theme of this series has been the mythology of the "rock star." This mythology as pointed out eloquently by **Eric Clapton** in the series, focuses around the lone blues artist, with nothing but his music to hold back the world. Often, that blues artist "sold his soul to the devil" to acquire musical talent.

Other traditions in rock point not only to the lone blues artist but also to minstrels in medieval times. Some focal points of both of these traditions include storytelling, a sense of overcoming (or subverting) oppression, (re) interpreting the musics of the elites for the masses, and the idea of a personal catharsis or release.

These traditions continue to have importance in rock music today. However, there are other traditions in rock that have increasing meaning and value as the concept of rock minstrelsy continues to be co-opted by mass media machines marketing this week's image. This tradition is the idea of the use of sound for its own sake.

Instrumental music in rock is nothing new. Since the birth of rock in the 1950s, a steady stream of rockabilly instrumentals, surf music, improvisational drone, Memphis soul, Jamaican dub, disco, techno and ambient musics have presented an alternate point of view to the idea of "one man and his attitude/guitar against the world." To these ears the idea of a subversive musical universe based on sound is far more threatening than ***any*** punk rock or metal posing (or for that matter, any **Bruce Springsteen** or whoever you want to name as a working-class hero). Sound is truly the last frontier in rock music.

During the 1960s and 70s, groups such as **Can**, **Hawkwind**, **Pere Ubu**, **Throbbing Gristle** and **Cabaret Voltaire** began to set the tone. In the 1980s, many rock bands experimented with combining a more textural ethos based on sound and noise with traditional rock and punk. **Sonic Youth** is perhaps the most commercially successful example of this crossover. **Sonic Youth**, along with other No Wave descendants such as **Live Skull** and **Swans**, combined guitars with electronics and ambiance to create shimmering soundscapes. On the West Coast, units such as **Savage Republic** combined Middle Eastern-influenced surf music (again, back to **Dick Dale**) with found object percussion and punk attitude to create a hybrid that still sounds fresh today. Of course, we can't forget the sizable contributions of the **Butthole Surfers** and Midwestern combos such as **Big Black** and **Spahn Ranch**. On the other side of the ocean, **On-U Productions**, **Meat Beat Manifesto** and more rock-based groups such as **Spacemen 3**, **Loop** and **My Bloody Valentine** presented combinations encompassing a global range of influences including psychedelia, hip-hop, Darmstadt electronic music, 50's easy listening/exotica, reggae and dub, conspiracy theories and more.

These trends have continued with much excitement in the 1990s. The movement of punk music into the mainstream which climaxed in 1991 forced many to again question the value of a rock tradition in which initial rebellion is turned so easily by greed into market manipulation and manufactured trends. So often these events happen through well-meaning but easily duped rock frontmen who view rock primarily as theatre rather than music. There is always a sense of danger that permeates great rock music. However, that danger often involves subtle interplay between the delivery of a frontman and the sophistication of the accompanying music.

Many artistically successful groups of the 1990s have obliterated this distinction through the use of instrumental tracks, sampled spoken word to replace vocals, and burying and distorting vocals to erase the idea of storytelling. Modern groups on both sides of the Atlantic (and elsewhere) including **Tortooise**, **Flying Saucer Attack**, **Gastr del Sol**, **Stereolab**, **Dirty Three**, **The Dead C**, **Yo La Tengo**, **The Orb**, **Laika**, **Main** and countless others continue to defy easy genre classifications and all are exploring and creating incredible new sounds.

What does all this mean for the future of rock? I think you will continue to see and hear more and more equivalents of **Fabian** and **The Monkees** and **Alanis Morrisette** as marketing and demographics become even more high-tech and ruthless. Let them have it. A quiet revolution is happening in rock music, and the later they discover it the better.

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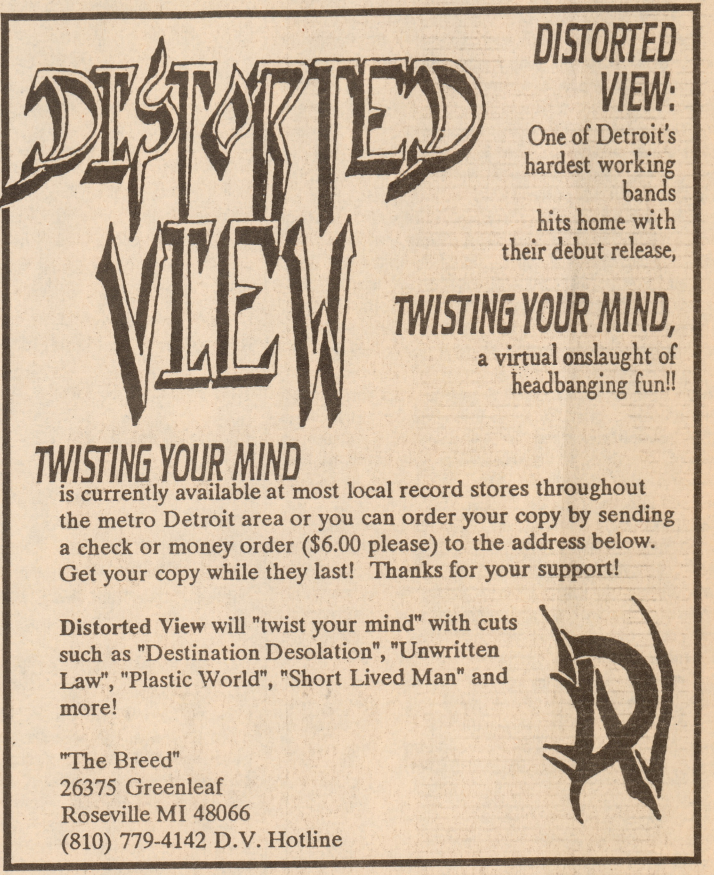

DISTORTED VIEW

DISTORTED VIEW:
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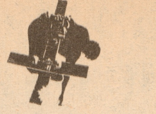
Soul-junk



1952 CD

Contradiction has got to be the most amazing form of creation through all mediums of expression so far in this decade. Yes, it's been happening during this century, but, for some reason, it's been in full swing in the past several years. The explanation: I've witnessed polar-opposite theories and such, come together and make a tangible force. Now, what do you think when the term "Christian Rock" comes to mind? Boring, pre-fab versions of "modern" rock perhaps? **Soul-Junk** is the newest form of what I consider extreme contradiction. **Glen "Galaxy" Galloway** has successfully joined expressive, uniquely arranged, unpredictable rock with, of all things, Christianity. Is it legit? I've had my time with the non-believer and it always comes down to the same conclusion; why bother with so much Christian reference? This 31 song disc (which is only part one, part two is a 16 song LP only) jumps from 16-track studio stuff to 4-track low-fi jumble. The major element that heightens this CD, is there is not one single bad track on this disc. How can a listener enjoy this and not be set back or frightened by the pro-Christ lyrics? It's part of the charm. Even though Christianity is low in my personal ranks of spiritual being, due to many evangelical set-backs, the Old Testament ranks high in study and reading from a class I once had. As for the New Testament, I have no opinion because I haven't read it. **Galloway** is a believer in the books and Christ, and (he) does not come off as a simple-minded Southern preacher. His strong belief is the strength and the power that keeps this CD from falling into the ranks of pretentiousness. The music is unbelievable. The fried-out rubbernecked loose-ended **Pere Ubu, Sebadoh** better than **Pavement** could ever be groove has this controlled virgin innocence of hypnotism. The constant curiosity is on how the next turn will take and the receiving of an unexpected surprise around the corner. The slippery sound bounces from soulful to rockin' to free jazz only in the unexplained, self-taught methods only conceivable from the band themselves. Bringing the two main contradictory elements together is nothing short of pure success. This 74 minute and 58 second record, easily joins the ranks of other great double LPs like **Royal Trux's** ***Twin Initiatives***, **Thinking Fellers'** ***Mother of All Saints***, **Dead C's** ***Harsh 70's Reality*** and **Sonic Youth's** ***Daydream Nation***. This could easily be seen as the best release of the year with only one or two competitors at its side. And that ain't moon talk. (**Homestead**) *Bryan Ramirez*

AIR LIQUIDE - Red - CD

Air Liquide is a techno band that really knows how to kick in the grooves. Red features 13 of the best techno jams I've heard this year. Funky percussion, quick beats and traces of intricate trance play a part in each of the songs. On "This Is Not A Mind Trip" (this is a body trip), **Air Liquide** truly explains the sonic journey that is guaranteed to get you moving. (**SM:)E**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

aMINIATURE - Murk Time Cruiser - CD

I'm going to give it to you straight. This *is* the best album of 1995. This *is* melodic punk at its finest (forget about all of that Green Day/Offspring crap). This *is* an album you should have in your collection. This *is* a band that should play in your town. Old school p-rockers will think of the Minutemen and Lawndale. New school teeny boppers will say Victim's Family and Meat Puppets. Both will be right. Both will be wrong. aminiature mix both history and presentness in their sound, but there is an individuality to *Murk Time Cruiser* that I would challenge anyone to find anywhere else. The most striking feature of this band is the dual rhythm guitar attack of John Lee and Mark Monieth. These two guys have transformed rhythmic interplay into an art. All 12 strings sing, crunch, and chop together in perfect harmony and fervid bliss. Check out opening track "He, The Bad Feeler" and you'll see what I mean. Now check it out again and realize it's been recorded backwards. Lee and Monieth mesh perfectly with the full throttle rhythm section of Colin Watson and guest drummer Mark Trombino. Whether they're providing a subtle backdrop for the guitar interplay or leading the band through a well-crafted breakdown, Watson and Trombino take their jobs very seriously. If you're demoing this disc at a local record store, don't put the headphones down until you've heard "Maximum Accident," a tour de force example of how tightly all four musicians play together. This track could be easily squeezed into the rotation on your favorite dance floor. I know this hasn't been a very objective review thus far and this *is* journalism (after a fashion) so allow me to dispel the myth that this band is without fault. The vocals are nearly impossible to decipher. As a result, aminiature comes off sounding mostly instrumental. *Murk Time Cruiser* is also incredibly fast paced. I didn't mind the tempo, but those of you looking for a new firehose are going to miss those quiet, tender breaks in this album. Both of these minor flaws, however, give aminiature their individuality and style. Appreciate them for who they are. Worship them for all that they will be. (Restless) *Eric Sikkema.*

AUTOMATIC 7 - s/t - CD

A good, solid punk rock record. The music is skin-tight, the lyrics are both intelligent and personal. They remind me of early **Social Distortion** quite a bit, as this sounds like it could've come out on **Posh Boy** back in '82. Sure they've got a "So-Cal" feel, but it doesn't distract. They also remind me of the **Red Rockers** -- again that 1982 feel -- with even a hint of the **Replacements**. A well written, well thought out and well executed LP. A band with a very strong future. This is a quality release. (**BYO**) *n. bates.*

BANCO DE GAIA

BANCO DE GAIA - Last Train To Lhasa - Dbl. CD

Lotsa soundscape venture with some dance type stuff, but more along the vein of the **KLF** ***Chill Out*** release. Not a fan of strictly electronic techoid crap yet, this holds firm with toppings of Mid-East and Asian flavored rhythms. Jumps from compelling to repetitive dullness. Perfect for coming down at 4 A.M. or that long early morning sex romp. (**Mammoth/Planet Dog**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

BIG ELECTRIC CAT - Burning Embers - CD

Seven songs--with different mixes of two of the ("Red Roses" and "Paris Skyes")--by one of the new breed of Goth bands. **Big Electric Cat**, from Australia, score very well in my books using electronic music and samples, to create a CD which is both haunting and danceable. The beats are very heavy and the mix is especially good. Now I know **Mr. T. Jack** will give me the business about this one, but this is one of the few CDs that gets regular rotation in Batesland. Dark wave at its best. (**Cleopatra**) *n. bates.*

BIG SANDY & HIS FLY-RITE BOYS - Swingin' West - CD

Like the Okies and other Dust Bowl refugees before them, some of the world's best rock-a-billy musicians have been lured to the sun and hospitable musical climes of south central California; home to Jake's Barbershop, Hepcat Records, Bakersfield, Town Hall Party and Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys! Their second Hightone release finds them feet facing firmly towards the west -- western swing and boogie as a matter of fact -- where Mr. Williams (Big Sandy) and company continue their turn from simple rock-a-billy to uptown hillbilly jazz. Make no mistake, though, this album is thoroughly enjoyable from start to finish. "Let Me In There, Baby" is a jivin' tune that highlights Lee Jeffries' tender tuggin' on his steel guitar and Ashlley Kingman's swingin' "take off!" guitar reminds one of Bill Haley's best early bop. "My Sinful Days Are Over" is a cute morality tale that will have you swearing off drinking and hell-raising (for at least 5 to 10 minutes) and its uptempo beat shows off Big Sandy's playful lyrics with mock sincerity. "Too Late To Be True" swings with the best of them as Jeffries lays down some killer-diller bandy-strings over Carl Sonny Leyland's jazzy chords. I'm glad to see the boys have taken my advice and finally did a traditional Mexican number; "Hey Muchachita" is a Mexican polka lain over a western swing beat - Roberto Williams' ode to Hank Williams' "Jambalaya"--and it's a good showcase for Bobby's simple yet sturdy beat-kit. "Blackberry Wine" is a real jump number, it'll make you a jitter bug wannabe in no time, with the boys' background vocals calling everyone out to the honky tonk hardwood floor! "We Tried To Tell You" is a quick and busy toe-tapper with the Fly-Rite Boys reminding Sandy he should pay more attention when it comes to their advice on love. 15 high falutin' Hightone cuts give you your money's worth and more--Dave Alvin's (The Blasters) traditional touch frames Robert's lyrics in an affectionate dance hall atmosphere - you just might smell the hay and hair tonic if you close your eyes hard enough. Recommended for Big Sandy fans and Hillbilly swing aficionados alike. (Hightone) *Del Villareal.*

BIKINI KILL - I Like ... - 7"

Ranting female vocals, every song has a moral. "I Hate Danger" talks of being ignored to the point of frustration in a boyfriend-ish situation while realizing he's not so cool, umm, predictable and very familiar. The flip offers angry verse regarding the female physique's association with pleasure as pain. "I believe in the radical possibilities of pleasure, babe." (**Kill Rock Stars**) *Surdu.*

BIRDBRAIN - Bliss - CD

Birdshit. (**TVT**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

BISCUIT - Sock-o - CD

Duo from the Detroit area travel all the way out East to lay down 12 tracks at **Noise NJ** with **Kramer** and a named **Steve Watson** at the helm. I won't complain about the outcome at all, but did **Kramer** pull the old "lover-your-stuff-and-will-cut-indie's-a-big-deal?" (which in actuality is a whopping low $50 per hour) Wise or not wise, this disc is very stripped down, with a guitar or two and light background instruments over the heoinized lullaby female vocals. Haunting innocent angel of death hypnotism that draws you in for your final sleep. Remember in **Kurosawa's** ***Dreams***, where the lost patrol on the mountain encountered death in the form of a gowned lady? This is the music that would best accompany the story. Very nice. (**Icon**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

BLACK LUNG - the depopulation bomb - CD
M.E.S.T. - Matter, Energy, Space, Time - CD

You don't see many two for one record sales these days, but if you did, that would really be the only way you'd get your money's worth on these two techno CDs. Each CD has its moments, **Black Lung**, the more experimental of the two, take a hyperactive, erratic approach to their music. Frantic electronic percussion that booms along to the dangerous beats that carry the tunes. Six of the 12 tracks on ***the depopulation bomb*** are actually quite amazing, especially "the more the profit...the more the confusion," which features an aggressive landscape that throbs and pulses along. However, other songs are slow drones that are even painful to listen to. **M.E.S.T.** take a more varied but restrained approach to their music, beeps and tweaks occupy their music with booming basslines. **R2D2** on acid. Yet there's another side to **M.E.S.T.'s** music, the dull intricate side, that places empty space to occasional quirks. **R2D2** short circuited. If you can't wait for a two for one sale on these CDs, check out the used bins, where people like me return these "half good" CDs. (**Fifth Colvmn**) & (**Dwell**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

BLONDE REDHEAD

BLONDE REDHEAD - La Mia Vita Violenta - CD

Noise pop from an unlikely combination of Italian and Japanese expatriates. This 10 song disc is quite good, which surprised me because some members of the "**ETCH** family" dismissed **BR** as **Sonic Youth** rip-offs (especially ironic sine **Steve Shelley** is the head honcho of the label this is on), so I expected the worst. My-oh-my were they wrong! The two lead-off tracks are pure pop masterpieces--very catchy, haunting melodies, with understated vocals that add to the overall impact of the songs. Every song is solid, making this a very worthwhile purchase and a disc that you'll play often. Bravo! (**Smells Like Records**) *n. bates.*

BODECO - High Window - 7"

Perfect soundtrack to a bad 70's movie involving wet asphalt, taxi cabs, flashing neon signs and porn hounds searching for their next fix. Hot Hohner organ action as well as delicious reverb, with enough evil twang to get the hips a rollin'. (**Safehouse/BMI**) *Surdu.*

BOSS HOG - s/t - CD

This band has always seemed to me to be exactly what it appeared to be at first glance: a side project. A pretty good one, mind you, but still a side project. In other words, **Spencer** saved the best riffs for the **Blues Explosion**, not **Boss Hog**. To be fair, they've always claimed that this is really his wife **Cristina's** band, so maybe the difference really was reflective of her sensibility winning out. Whatever... On their major label debut, **Boss Hog** have come up with what is in my mind their best record yet. The riffs are first rate, and if you're talking **Spencer** that's all important, because the man really doesn't write songs, he writes riffs; sometimes great ones. **Cristina's** vocals lend a very sassy charm to the mix, and the drummer has improved by leaps and bounds over past efforts. A more fully realized and developed band is on display here. There's a lot of the high octane blooze one would probably expect, but a few change-ups might keep the listener off-balance (and that's a good thing), such as "Ski Bunny's" 60's punk as-filtered-through the **Gories** sound, and the touching **Ike & Tina Turner** cover, "I Idolize You." (**DGC**) *C. Fuller.*

BRAINIAC - Internationale - CD EP

A one-of-a-kind band with a one-of-a-kind sound. Their music has a quirky feel to it that borders on pop music but doesn't. Enigmatic, energetic and enthralling. "Go Freaks Go" has a definite stick-to-it-tiveness, whist the other songs will grow on you. I'm looking forward to more (i.e. a full length) in the future. **Touch & Go** get hero points for inking these kids. (**Touch & Go**) *n. bates.*

BRECKMAN DUO - The Greatest Of Our Time - CS

Long time collaborators John Olson and Bryan Ramirez are the Duo in charge of this cassette release and anyone familiar with their Lansing-area rock project Universal Indians will know about their obsession with noise. With a soft *"One two three four."* **It commences, two sides worth of static and screech that either soothes or annoys, depending on one's disposition. Each man, credited only with "half machine," the Duo feeds back with vigor and creates a dense implosion of sonics that remains dissonant and frantic throughout. Challenging listening. It can be said that "anyone can do this," but anyone doesn't. (American Tapes)** *Fred Beldin.*

MARK BRODIE & THE BEAVER PATROL s/t 7" and - The Shores Of Hell - CD

Most of the recent deluge of surf bands do not do the genre justice, merely mimicking the style and forgetting the sound. **Mark Brodie & The Beaver Patrol** get to the root, playing extremely clean surf, the way **The Astronauts**, **The Ventures** and countless other mid-60's instrumental surf bands did. A dead ringer for the generic surf sounds of endless summer-era Pacific N-West bands. (**Shredder**) *Pants Mulligan.*

BUGATTITYPE 35 - s/t - CS

Consisting of bass player **Connie Ward**, guitarist **Wendy Schneider** and drummer **Rise Christeson**, Chicago's **Buggattitype 35's** songs cover gender issues and class differences. "Three Years" shows spouse abuse from the female's perspective while the notorious "Killboard" attacks sexist advertising: *"She looks 14 and her lips are red. She's got puppy dog eyes... It's an ad. Just a picture. Are you sure? Are you sure? If I smell good, you'll fuck me."* "Green" has some amazing acoustic guitar overlays. An impressive first effort as **Buggattitype 35** grows in notoriety. *Allen Salyer.*

CHANNEL ZERO - Unsafe - CD

Vocalist **Franky DSVD** got him a set o' rusty pipes which he uses to full effect on this release from Belgium's **Channel Zero**. Angry, desperate, scratchy...whatever other silly little terms I can come up with to convey to you, the reader, that **Franky DSVD** is now a force to be reckoned with. Imagine two bums who've spent the better part of the last 50 years smokin' Camel no-filters and drinkin' big jugs of warm Pabst...and you may get a clearer picture of what I'm talking about. Bellowing booming captivating..."Heroin" and "Bad to the Bone" are immediate standouts. I wish I would've had this in my head as I sat through a set by local loser **The Dave Hill** recently. It may have inspired me to give him the barbed-wire snuggy he deserves (never seen such a perfect example of someone who should be stamped out like a forest fire. I have no need for **The Dave** in my life). Anyway, this is a righteous listen and you'd do well to pick it up. (**Metal Blade**) *D. Wood.*

COBRA VERDE - One Step Away From Myself - 7" & Leather - 7"

More or less simultaneous release from these Clevelanders. "One Step" is as good a rock song as you'll hear any time soon. The vocals are stellar (Really! I don't usually give a shit, but...), and the band has its thing down pat. **Cobra Verde** has a unique sound that it makes this band distinct from the masses of "rockers" currently plying their trade. "Leather" explores what it would be like to have a "second skin." That's all fine and dandy, but I don't want to be around when they find out. **Death Of Samantha** fades further into recess as this band pushes onward. They made one of the five best records of 1994, and these two are keepers as well. Batting 1.000 thus far, **Cobra Verde** is almost enough to convince me that all the hype about Cleveland actually being livable nowadays might not be off target. (**Sub Pop**) & (**Scat**) *C. Fuller.*

CYBER-TEC - s/t - CD EP
ELECTRO ASSASSIN - The Divine Invasion - CD

What we call "industrial music" in the U.S. is called "electronic body music" in Europe. The difference is, where American bands like **Nine Inch Nails** and **Ministry** mix guitar and metal in their music to give it an edge, European artists like **Cyber-Tec** and **Electro Assassin**, use computer drum patterns and complex synth sounds. In one corner we have, ***The Divine Invasion***, by **Electro Assassin**, which sounds a little too much like **Front 242** without the intensity. The songs have a good, aggressive sound, but often carry on for far too long. **Electro Assassin** also seems fascinated with creating boring sound pattern songs like "Nova Mob," where the beats per minute are less than 10. In the other corner, **Cyber-Tec** also sounds a lot like **Front 242**, but since **Jean Luc DeMeyer** was a member of that band, it's acceptable. What **Electro Assassin** lacks in aggressiveness, **Cyber-Tec** features three very strong songs and remixes of each. The remixes get a bit tired, but with just three original tracks, **Cyber-Tec** show they reign supreme in the electronic body music arena. (**Fifth Colvmn**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

DADDY STITCH - The Douglas Chapter - CD

Impressive release from **Daddy Stitch** whom I've seen live a coupla' times and been rather indifferent towards, but this CD is a good representation of their sound. Well produced by a host of Detroit's finest, including **Dave Feeny** at the Tempermill and **Michael Nehra** and **Dave Piechura** at the White Room Studios. I'll just bet this band either already has, or will shortly become, the target of those nasty major labels. Proceed with caution gentlemen, protect what it is you do best! (**Skillet**) *D. Wood.*

THE DEAD C - The White House - CD

This powerful disc evokes to me what bands like **Pavement** would sound like if they were truly progressive. Heavy on early synth timbres, it runs the gamut from 30's **John Cage** to **Darmstadt** electronic college to more rock-oriented grooves. Has the feel of a unit that jams constantly and creates symphonies through telepathy. Worth securing. (**Siltbreeze**) *Richard Bowser.*

THE DEAD MILKMEN - Stoney's Extra Stout (Pig) - CD

The band that started as a fanzine parody, finishes their 10 year recording career with ***Extra Stout...*** **or so they say. The same simple guitar, bass and drums set-up hasn't changed from the early** ***Big Lizard*** **days of playing odd gigs, including antique fairs, shopping malls and steak joints. This recording, however, has progressed (at least in cost) from the first $900 recording on Fever Records. From Fever, the Milkmen signed with Enigma after some radio success in 1990, and after five years and some uncertainty, to Restless Records where the Fever catalog was distributed.** ***Extra Stout...*** **has the same odd and satirical the Milkmen are known for. "Peter Bazooka" spots a congressmen emerging from a titty bar, a proclamation again of the Milkmen as holy ancestors of the low-fi**

political "fuck you." The Milkmen do evolve a bit with *Extra Stout...*, trying their talents with a little funk ditty, "Crystalline," complete with horns, an odd space-like guitar solo and sapped-out lyrics. Vocals, also, get the familiar 90's sing-it-through-the-telephone treatment on a couple tracks. Look for *Chaos Rules*, a compilation of live performances in the Philly club circuit and a "Peter Bazooka" video coming to a television set near you. (Restless) *Surdu.*

DEATHLINE INTL. - Zarathoustra - CD

Going by popular cyberpunk and comic hero names, **Count Zero** and **Spawn**, make up **Deathline Intl.**, an overload of all the current forms of electronic music. ***Zarathoustra***, which means the inner light that can be found within a person, seems like an unlikely message for a band involved in dark music to espouse. However, contrast and diversity is exactly what **Deathline Intl.** is all about. I pick up parts of **Skinny Puppy**, **Front 242**, **NIN** and even death metal artists like **Slayer**, with **Deathline Intl.**'s music. There are only a couple of weak points on ***Zarathoustra***, the vocals (which is always a weak point with industrial artists) have no range and often follow the same patterns, and with 17 songs running 76 minutes, there's just too much material here for anyone to sit through in one listen. But with a number of great samples, a fantastic cover of "Tainted Love" and several other worthy songs make this CD one of the best industrial CDs I've heard this year. This CD also came with a computer disc, which is probably very interesting, but nobody I know can get it to run. (**Cop International**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

DESSAU - Details Sketchy - CD

I've got a lot of problems with this CD. The first thing being, I can't figure out if this is a full-length CD or an EP. There's eight songs, but two are remixes. Three other songs don't count because they're not really songs. They're excursions, a nifty bass or guitar line, some percussion and one of those slogan choruses like *"Muscle...Muscle...Muscle..."* The second problem is whether Dessau is really a band, or just a bunch of guys from other bands helping out a couple of dudes. There are members from Ministry, Revolting Cocks, Die Warzau, even Nine Inch Nails, and two guys named John and Norm. The last problem I have, is the last cut, "Old Dudes Rest." This is track 99 on the CD, so the 91 tracks of empty space is annoying, and then when the song finally comes up, it's a two minute piece of crap. With that said, one problem I don't have with *Details Sketchy* is some of the music is damn good. Imagine a sound of all the bands I mentioned above put together, and that's what "Sun" the first cut gives you. It's aggressive, catchy, loud and unique. "Chalk Line" is another good song that combines an uneven Middle Eastern melody, hip hop percussion and a brilliant vocal mix. I guess the phrase "a diamond among the rough" could accurately describe *Details Sketchy*. (Fifth Colvmn) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

DICK JUSTICE - Superfancy... - 7"

Garage-country madness reminiscent of the openings of some black and white shootout scene. But before the dust settles, the **Dusters** deliver the tonic of punk, complete with solid vocals, somehow suggesting those of **fluf.** (**Thick**) *Surdu.*

THE DRAGS - Dragsploitation...Now! - CD

Stripped down pure energy five piece garage outfit playing two minute odes to those things so near and dear to our hearts: Teenage years, teenage rebellion, girls and other pre-pubescent mysteries. They're not **The Sound Barrier** or **Nobody's Children**, but the sound and attitude are there, and that's what really counts. (**Estrus**) *Pants Mulligan.*

81 MULBERRY - Drive Shaft To Culdesac - CD

Thick sounding in a NYC noise sort of way (i.e. **Helmet**, **Surgery**). We're treated to 16 low-end heavy, crunchy songs. These gentlemen have numerous reference points that you, the listener can pick up on, that when taken in toto, work rather well. The music drips power -- even when played quietly you can feel the punch. The quirky vocals over the top add a distinct flavor to the recipe. I believe this CD marks the debut of **Pleather Records** and I can't think of a finer how-do-you-do. A very strong release. (**Pleather**) *n. bates.*

THE FALL-OUTS - s/t - CD

Thoughtfully conceived **Mudhoney** side-project, minus the trappings associated with such things (read: the absence of "Mr. Bad Idea" **Mark Arm**). With that aside, **The Fall-Outs** play "**Estrus**-style"garage rock with a mid-80's revival sound (i.e. **The Lyres**, **Fuzztones**, everything on **Midnight Records**) without pigeonholing themselves into a "retro" moniker. Very classy. (**Super Electro**) *Pants Mulligan.*

STEVE FERGUSON & THE MIDWEST CREOLE ENSEMBLE - Mama U-Seapa - CD

Old people will remember **Ferguson** from **NRBQ**. If only his re-emergence on the scene were half as good. The cover of the disc shows **Steve Ferguson** standing by a steaming cauldron, his guitar immersed to the neck therein. But the CD doesn't steam or boil or jump or hop or groove or rock. It sounds like the bands at the **Green Door**, our local blues bar with third rate musicians playing the same set three times a night for the last five years. (**Schoolkid's**) *Scott Joyner.*

FIREWORKS - Baby Go b/w Don't Let It Go - 7"

Whoa! Another fine slice of **Fireworks** vinyl recorded right in the Motor City, released on a local label and this one has yet to cool down. The Texas / Michigan axis rises once more. On the A-side they tear through the **Avantes'** "Baby Go" with their usual fervor, but the real treat is the B-side cover of **Bo Diddley's** "Don't Let It Go," where **Darin**, **Janet** and **James** are joined by **Mick Collins** and **Dan Kroha** (ex-**Gories**, **Blacktop**, **Demolition Dollrods**) for what could be **Fireworks'** hottest waxing yet. Necessary. It's nice to support something local that's worth supporting and **Human Fly** be worth it. (**Human Fly**) *T. Jack.*

FIVE STORY FALL

FIVE STORY FALL - s/t - CD

Even though I think the drum sound needs to be punched up a whole bunch, there's still plenty more pluses than minuses on this initial effort from **Five Story Fall**. The guitar sound is great, thick and comfy like a leaky bean-bag chair, and singer **Charlotte Webb Swenson** is perfect as the catalyst for their angry, desperate material. I've noticed some **D.R.I.** references in other reviews I've read about this band and I don't get that comparison at all. Maybe that is more noticeable in their live shows, something I've not had the pleasure of yet. Either way, they may want to steer clear of that reference. (**Puppethead**) *D. Wood.*

FLEDGLING - s/t - CD

Fledgling is a female-fronted folk rock like **X** is folk rock... maybe punk folk? Written and sung by **Eileen Rose**, she had a very versatile voice, using certain vocal styles depending on the song: **Melissa Ethridge** on "Soloman's Crown," **Divinyls** on "OCD," or **Martha Davis** on "August." "Well Read Boy" is even more impressive as she uses deep talk voice in front with higher register vocal singing harmony in the background. Backed by **Dave Bull's** excellent guitar playing epitomized in the steamy, high energy waa-waa guitar of "Red Messiah" or the shimmering watery guitar in "Break It Down." It's this combination that makes **Fledgling** one of the better picks of 1995. "Well Read Boy" is the best song, starting out slow but demanding and building up emphatically. "Tom Waits Crooning" is not a dedication, more of a "what makes Mr. Waits think he's lived a more interesting life than us?" (**TVT**) *Allen Salyer.*

FLYING SAUCER ATTACK - Further - CD

Take the more feedback drenched parts of **A.R. Kane** as a starting point. Take 500 more hits of acid and hang out with **Syd Barrett** for awhile around the 4-track. An imploding masterpiece. This is the record to play when you want only your friends to stay. (**Drag City**) *Richard Bowser*

45 GRAVE - Sleep In Safety - CD

Reissue of one of **45 Grave's** weaker (if not the weakest) releases on CD for the first time. Unfortunately, for the uninitiated, **Restless** didn't reissue their earlier material, which should be the benchmark by which all Goth bands should be measured (along with early **Christian Death**). Pop culture mavens will delight in the fact that there are two versions of **45 Grave's** hit, "Party Time," the song made famous (and deservedly so) in the B-movie classic ***Return Of The Living Dead***. Singer **Dinah Cancer** will always have a special place in my heart, but this disc is mediocre at best. (**Restless**) *n. bates.*

FRIENDS OF DEAN MARTINEZ - The Shadow of Your Smile - CD

I have a lot of records like this in my collection; however, all of them are at least 30-years old. Lounge/surf instrumentals, some with a Western feel, some with a more atmospheric bent. The majority of the 13 tracks are originals. Sometimes reminds me also at times of **American Music Club** without vocals. I enjoyed this record immensely. It is well played and forms a perfect back drop to nearly any social gathering. (**Sub Pop**) *Richard Bowser.*

REEVES GABRELS - The Sacred Squall Of Now - CD

In the last issue I trashed a last effort of **Gabrels** and whoever the other guy was for their improv thing. Well, **Mr. Gabrels** pulls off something much better in the rock vein. It's surprisingly catchy. Lots of midi junk thrown in randomly, but is easily avoidable. Guest appearances by the near-flawless **David Bowie** and an awful vocal by brilliant actor **Gary Oldman**. Mucho guitar trickery galore. (**Upstart**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

GARDEN VARIETY - Knocking the Skill Level - CD

This Garden Variety, they have got the goods. Prime time goods. Dick Clark would eat this shit up, right up. Energetic, engaging and most of all -- melodic. These cats are playing their cards just right. If it's by luck or by self-taught business savvy, who cares?

For the past four or five years Superchunk and Drive Like Jehu have both entered the realms of the rock undiscovered. The settlers are now moving in and claiming stake to a little land. Garden Variety is picking up the pieces of Drive Like Jehu's 7-minute strum and piecing it back together any way they feel like with Superchunk's grinding pop song.

As for Dick Clark: well, just watch the shit. The man loves the prepackaging of the radical. Say, Ben Weasel, or some dim bulb who is acutely aware of all the trends, gets a slot on national TV with Punk USA (taken from his compilation), showcasing the hottest punk bands and the slickest duds. Garden Variety is the god damn house band. Drive Like Jehu can't do it because they are too far off into the stratosphere. We all want something to hum. Garden Variety is no less legit than Drive Like Jehu or Superchunk. It's just that a band of this cloth owns the spot. A tight band aware of the radical visionaries in their field who can right an awesome hook, chop, lick and what not. Most of all, they are malleable enough to slither gently into upcoming trends without being detected. Check out their last album. No Tommy James & The Shondells action here. One day "Hanky Panky" the next day "Crimson and Clover." Come on Tom, show some subtle transition. Chew on it a bit. But more than anything Garden Variety is willing to give 110% for 10 full-on rock songs, all just to please the kids. Yeah, after I think about this Paul Revere & The Raiders parallel is a hot one. Cosmic in a way. Yeah. Not an insult but a compliment of the highest degree. Just one listen to the Raiders greatest hits album tells you those cats, underneath the afternoon time slot and shameless grounding in the product of Tin Pan Alley, became a genuine, full-tilt rock group. Show me a solid-state turntable and I'll show you a 45 of "Just Like Me." On TV once I watched Mark Lindsay and company rock that song while goofing off on a child's swing set right in the studio. Humiliating, right? Who cares? No less legit than the so called hip snoozer shit like June Of '44. That's what Garden Variety is and why this album is the rock and why it wears you out after one full listen and why it deserves all the attention it's getting lately.

And one day, in about five years, their "Indian Reservation" will be due. I'll see you then. (Headhunter Records) *Justin Farrar.*

GATHERING -Mandylion - CD

Gathering is a German metal band, which rather surprised me. The cover art led me to conclude a world music band. A big guitar sound, similar to their countrymen the **Scorpions**. **Anneka van Gierbergen's** expansive voice has a slight Mid-Eastern twinge, no German present at all. Lots of nice, soothing guitar instrumentals, high sustain, similar to the 70's German space jazz band **Novalis**, a reference that will undoubtedly be meaningless to anybody. "Strange Machines" voices her desire for time travel. "Leaves" is the best song: *"I close your eyes with my mouth / Now you don't see anything but you feel my breath all / I can feel you too."* This record has been on my turntable a lot. (**Century Media**) *Allen Salyer.*

RON GEESIN - Land of Mist - CD

This guy used to work with **Pink Floyd** and he wants you to know it. There's a little label pasted to the disc case that says so, the liner notes reiterate the impressive fact and, in case we didn't catch on, one of the songs is called "To Roger Waters, Wherever You Are." **Geesin** must have done all the background noise that **Floyd** was famous for -- pigs and babies and fighter planes. I assume so, anyway, because that's what this CD is full of -- cacophonous electronic and natural sounds, apparently unrelated to each other. I can't grasp this disc (made up of pieces from the early 70's to the late 80's), unless you're supposed to put it on for background noise before shaving your eyebrows off and throwing an insane snit. (**Cleopatra**) *Scott Joyner.*

GRAVITAR / UNIVERSAL INDIANS - 12"

Local noise mavens **Gravitar** and **Universal Indians** pile tons of aggro power into this effort, making others of their ilk sound like so many giddy burn victims; waiting for that next morphine drip; wishing, no praying, that they had only listened to those in the know, and bought only childproof lighters. (**MGOGM**) *Pants Mulligan*

GRIN - Fizzle Out and Fly Right - CD

Wasn't there already a band in the early 70's led by **Nils Lofgren** named **Grin**? Ooh, lawsuit! I was packing for a Texas trip and heard this from the other room. The Ann Arbor band didn't sound so bad. Now I face my stereo with full attention and receive this silly kool-aid shit smile smarty boy rock. Nothing jumps out too heavily, but has good sense of humor and great **King Crimson**-ish arrangements (you bastards never thought I'd say that). Major plus for avoiding the typical college sound. *Bryan Ramirez*

GWAR - Rag Na Rok - CD

Honestly--I think musically this may be the best thing **Gwar** has done. Ever. It doesn't necessarily rock, but it's a sound piece of work altogether. **Sleazy P.** is back with a rap. "Surf of Syn" is quite the surf song, done in a style possibly only **Gwar** could do. I gotta say I dig it. It's not typical, you may have to give a few listens before judgment. (**Metal Blade**) *Mazzola.*

HITTING BIRTH - Feel The Freest - CD

Twisted abrasive rock with tight, tribal percussion. **Freest** mixes metal guitar riffs and cosmic religious advice as lyrics reminisce somehow of later **Monster Magnet** recordings. Telephone ring used in an almost "**Primus**" fashion, heavy staccato with bass and drums on one track. Lots of manipulation with vocals, a very eclectic release that ranges from basic metal to hot, hollow-sounding **Bonedaddy**-type percussion, slight brass section wash ending in a psychotic wave of sound vomit. Check it out. Hope they can pull it off live. (**Will Records**) *Surdu.*

HOSTILITY - Brick - CD

Man, this disc absolutely smokes, surprising the beejeezus right outaya! Hailing from Wichita, Kansas, **Hostility** have honed their brand of angry, honest, drop-tuned chopsocky to the point of near perfection. Brothers **Dean** and **Duane Book** lend considerable guitar and time-keeping talent as well as a fresh realistic approach to the music that comes off right on. "We don't write lyrics about the street because we're not from the street, we're in the middle of a damned wheat field! We just write about personal experiences," explains **Dean**. It's exactly this kind of attitude that I find refreshing amongst today's up-and-comers. **Hostility** have opened for the likes of **Obituary**, **Fear Factory, Kyuss** and **Crowbar**, and I sure won't be surprised to see 'em on the road in a big way real soon. This one stays real close to my CD player. (**Century Media**) *D. Wood.*

INSANE CLOWN POSSE - Riddlebox - CD

Won't even bother you some of the amazing figures I've been hearing (from people who know) regarding the number of copies of *Riddlebox* flyin' out the doors of record stores all over Michigan, you probably wouldn't believe me if I told you. This latest I.C.P. release, their first for their new major-label home is tough, beat-heavy and the fulfillment of everything that's been promised and if you don't already have it...you're probably not even in the picture, bitchboy!

This is a full-length, all-encompassing, masterfully executed and produced piece of Motor City hooliganism that'll piss off parents and rednecks alike. It contains a big ass version of the I.C.P. classic, "Chicken Huntin," as well as another Wicked Clown standby, "Dead Body Man." ***"If you think I'm crazy / Take a look at yourself / Ya got dead deer heads up on yo' shelf / On your keychain is a little baby rabbit's hand / I'm just a dead body man."*** **These two tracks seem to be present to help bring the now national audience up to speed, but new material dominates and the title track is a super-wicked little pot sticker that gets the festivities off to an evil start. Shaggy 2 Dope and Violent J. bask in the carnival barker motif mackin' and jackin' as the two evil ringleaders ready to help us with our descent into darkness.**

There's lots to enjoy on this new disc, something that has been a sticking point with previous I.C.P. releases is that they've been a little light in the weight department, but this is chock full of new material for all ya'll. If you're not too busy groovin' to some shit Bill Belemy's tryin' to lay on you, or if you're in the mood to lay it down wicked-like with the two Faygo-fueled, southwest mack-sters, get on this one. (Battery/Jive) ***D. Wood.***

INSANE CLOWN POSSE

IPECAC LOOP - ex - CD

"Gothic techno," not a bad idea really, dark music and groovy beats with percussion to liven it up. Unfortunately, if you screw it up you end up with **Ipecac Loop** (**Cameron Lewis**) playing impressively boring music that doesn't move, it hesitates. Just when you think the song's going to pick up, **Ipecac Loop** decides to extend that moment, leaving the listener frustrated. A couple of the songs almost work, like "Again and Again" and "Blur," where the music builds along on a "soundtrack-ish" path and you lie back and build the scene in your head while the music is playing. But there are just too many other songs that when you close your eyes, you see an endless black hole and hear a very slow moving electronic dirge. Have keyboard, won't travel; 'nough said. **(Fifth Colvmn)** *Mike Pfeiffer.*

JACK KILLED JILL - Well - CD

Jack Killed Jill is a return to olde fashioned punk (now there's a phrase I thought I'd never use). Vocalist **Revik Delfin** (*Delfin* is a brand of contraceptive foam) has just the right amount of pissed off blasé. "Romeo's Fall" could easily be the musical version of "Romeo's Bleeding." Lots of anti-military, anti-soldier songs. **Jack Killed Jill** covers **Avenger's** "We Are The One" whom they borrow a lot of style from. "Vent" is by far the best song, *"Holing in, within, anger, rage or happiness. Oh, I'm just sick of it... do I let go, how shall I vent?"* (**New Red Archives**) *Allen Salyer.*

JAPANESE BEETLES - Cookout - 7"

This is a band that has a record breaking existence of 24 hours. **Michie** from **Shonen Knife** does the predictable for one tune. The second side betters itself with great harmonies and a great chorus. Best off all, it's short. Features **Combustible Edison** and **Big Dipper** members. (**Roadtrip**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

JENNIFER PATIENCE - demo tape

Besides having a really cool name, this local band plays incredibly catchy music. At first listen these sticky, bubble punk tunes may go in one ear and out the other, but then a funny thing happens: You find one of these songs playing happily in your brain. Then you go home and put the tape in and realize what unconsciously made your day so great. If you're smart the next day, you'll wake up and repeat the process. Watch for these fun bunch of fun guys playing locally. ***Mike Pfeiffer.***

JUGHEAD'S REVENGE - 13 Kiddie Favorites - CD

You want 80's style punk rock that isn't watered down **MTV** pabulum? Then chew on this nugget for awhile, 'cause **Jughead's Revenge** deliver. They also toss in a little So-Cal pop-punk for good measure--breaking up the music a bit. The intelligent lyrics were a nice surprise, i.e. a lot of worthwhile ideas and observations, with my fave being "49/61". Yepper, kick back, relax and blast this baby, 'cause it'll get all your good parts movin' right again. **(BYO)** *n. bates.*

KARMA TO BURN - s/t - 10"

Instrumental rock with flair. Enough novel harmonic ideas to keep it interesting and a refreshing lack of cheesy retro pose or attitude. From West Virginia. (**Roadtrip**) *Richard Bowser.*

KILL SWITCH...KLICK - Oddities & Versions - CD

With a title like **Oddities & Versions** you're basically guaranteeing that if you're not a fan of the band, you're probably not going to enjoy this release. **Kill Switch...Klick** prove this theory correct, releasing a CD full of outdated, badly produced material. All of the songs sound like stuff that was on **Wax Trax** years ago, with the exception of "Her Trembling Hands," which sounds like a bad **Depeche Mode** song. The list price of this CD is $9.98, but from the lack of quality material, it should be much less than that to entice any buyers. (**Cleopatra**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

DAVID LA DUKE - Rock Hard Rocker - CD

Heh heh heh. You people are in for a treat. **Mr. La Duke** hails from one of my favorite cities, Louisville, Kentucky, and do you know why he's the "Rock Hard Rocker?" Well, not that your "out of the 80's and into the 90's" mind would care, but this disc is the definitive fear from the last decade's riff rock overdose of those cock-rock bands that us rural types had a hard time avoiding. **La Duke** won't let the fucker die! Okay, some of the **Nugent**-esque riffs are sorta cool, but the other mediums he touches on (***Top Gun*** dramatic soundtrack stuff) just kills these ears. The best thing about the thin production is how apparent the recording on a tape machine with dirty heads stands out with that particular "warped" sound, this is a fucking CD folks! "Rock and Roll Fever," "Rock and Roll Railroad," "Get Your Thing A Rockin'," and "Rock The Nite Away" are titles that might compel you to, perhaps, buy five copies for yourself. (**Sinbad Productions**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

LAGWAGON - Hoss - CD

I hate the term "pop punk." It's over-used, trite and doesn't do the bands in question diddley-doo. However, what do you call a punk rock band that writes catchy riffs? Anyway, **Lagwagon** fall into that category, i.e. they have really good chops. **Joey**, their singer, has a mature point of view lyrically--dealing with relationship issues intelligently. On top of everything else, they're tighter 'n a Republican at a pro-choice rally. An album that'll grow on you the more you play it. Trust me. (**Fat Wreck Chords**) *n. bates.*

LAURELS - Grave Digger... - 7"

Solid, distorted guitar work with huge, hollow sounding drums that sound as if it was recorded in a tunnel. Massive reverb on the vocals as well as enough on guitar to cure any surf fan of it for life. The tunnel-like recording gives everything a twisted mesh resulting in an overall feel of intangibility and coarseness. Look for future work with **Steve Albini** as well as past comps and singles on **Dot Dot Dash**. This is one of the best things **Thick Records** has to offer. (**Thick**) *Surdu.*

LEAETHER STRIP - Legacy of Hate and Lust - CD

This CD came as a pleasant surprise to me. I always pictured Leaether Strip as this pretentiously dark band that played simple industrial music with bad production. And from the artwork accompanying this, that's exactly what you'd expect. However, once the CD is on, the facade fades and the real Leaether Strip appears as a tortured soul searching for understanding in his own twisted way. Claus Larson, the force behind Leaether Strip, bears his soul through slow melodic dirges like, "We're Losing Time" and faster dance tracks like "I Wanna Hate You." What really impresses me about this release is the production mix, everything is in the right place. The vocals, which are both human and processed bestial growls, are above the music, and the music is composed of complex synth rhythms using gothic elements. Trent Reznor hails Leaether Strip as one of his favorite bands, and maybe that's because instead of hiding behind obnoxious noise and stylistic sludge, Leaether Strip isn't afraid of revealing their inner dark tendencies for all to witness. (Cleopatra) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

LEFTY LUCY - Gauche - 7"

Some crazy coolness from Minneapolis. Each member takes a turn on vocals giving each song a definite, individual sound, while churning out the tunes with an odd low-fi, recorded-in-the-john-with-bad-equipment sound. Tinny distortion with **Cows**-like horn action. Get the single and receive a neat-o Grilled Cheese with Fries sticker, man. (**Skinnie Girl**) *Surdu.*

LIFE OF AGONY - Ugly - CD

Avoiding literally all perceived clichés, this new Life Of Agony CD is a fresh smartly written and well-conceived disc that displays a firm understanding of the principles of thud. The first tent being that you don't gotta whack 'em over the head every song, it's just that a thunderous crack to the cranium is useful, especially when well placed. Life Of Agony make all the right moves on *Ugly*, their latest for one of my fave labels, Roadrunner.

Not so surprising that Steve Thompson produced this, considering his track record as of late. He did the new one for Clutch, he also produced the Speedball record which is still smokin' through my speakers on a regular basis, this guy is on the proverbial roll and we're all the better for it. Every single track on this disc is a winner (I love it when that happens) making it a very wise purchase for those of you looking for something that you're gonna like from start to finish.

Displaying an amazing range of lyrical content and emotion, Life Of Agony peel paint with seemingly little effort. In track five, entitled "Let's Pretend," Keith Caputo laments, *"Sometimes I like to pretend / That she knows me"* over some of the most straightforward but powerful jammage I'm hearin' today. "Other Side of the River" is a haunting vision of darkness, but why try and pick it apart ... it's all good ya'll. Included is a spooky version of the Simple Minds' mid-80's Molly Ringwald-fueled "Don't You (Forget About Me)," and Life Of Agony take this mindless piece of Euro-drivel and give it a dark, gloomy feel that would probably wake the dead if played near a cemetery. Hey! There's an idea! (Roadrunner) *D. Wood*

JULIANA LUECKING + EVE BEGLARIAN - Dream Cum Go Down - CD

This is a collection of interviews with lesbians, and they're asked the same three questions: "What's your favorite sex fantasy?" "What makes you cum?" and "How do you go down on a woman?" The answers are frank, sexy and make for very interesting listening. You know I like it, so why even ask? (Kill Rock Stars) *D. Wood.*

LUNA - Penthouse - CD

Immediate pleasure. Very accessible. Very Luna. Very quickly consumed and digested. Time will tell if tomorrow I puke or feel fine. I've always liked their material as well as all Galaxie 500 material. It defines the concept that music doesn't have to be complicated to be good. The last track, "Freakin' and Peakin'," is without a doubt one of the coolest, laid-back tracks I've heard this year with awl dat french stuff n' shit. (Elektra) *CBH3.*

MAD PARADE - Jigsaw Reality - CD

Kenny Vogel keeps puttin' out gems, and this is no exception. LA old-timers, **Mad Parade**, are back with a very powerful 12 song slice of punk rock. The songs are reminiscent of bands like **DOA**, **Red Rockers** and **Mekons** with a pinch of **Social Distortion** tossed for good measure. The music itself is memorable & catchy, and the lyrics are mature (read: ironic). The guitars and multi-voice choruses crash ferociously out of your speakers. This record's definitely been made to play loud. Anthemic and tight, **Jigsaw Reality** gets the two thumbs up from me. Good stuff, gang. (**Satellite**) *n. bates.*

MALFORMED EARTHBORN - Defiance of the Ugly the Merely Repulsive - CD

This is a wild collaboration between **Danny Lilker** and **Scott** of **Brutal Truth** and **Shane Embury** of **Napalm Death**, the results being about what you would expect considering their prime motivation. That being the likes of **Skinny Puppy**, **Coil** and other industrial death rockers that the trio have a common interest in. While on the **Campaign For Musical Destruction** tour in the summer of 1992, the three began to develop some of this material, and put the whole thing on tape after the tour's completion. The result is a stark, harrowing vision of hell that could probably motivate **Anton LeVay** outta his Laz-Y-Boy and down to the river bank for a good old fashioned blood-letting. If you like it dark, but with an industrial dance twist, this is your thing. (**Release Records**) *D. Wood.*

MARILYN MANSON

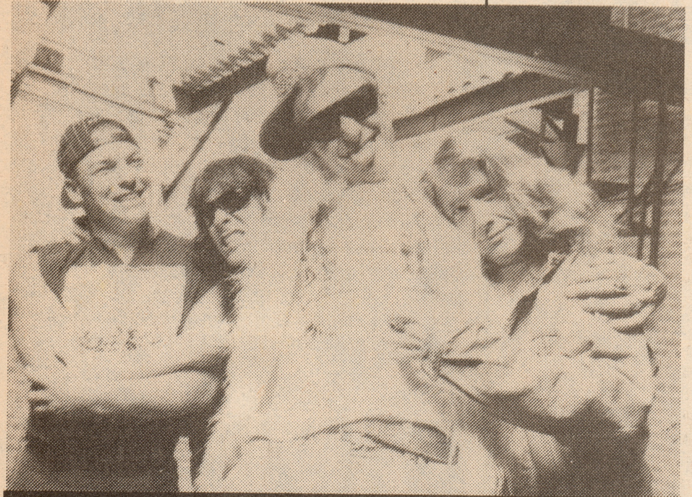
MARILYN MANSON - Smells Like Children - CD EP
ASYLUM CHOIR - Dead Girls Don't Say No - CS

"Welcome to my nightmare, I think you're going to like it, I think you're going to feel that you belong..." **Alice Cooper**

Step right up and listen to some of the scariest music around. We've got chills, we've got thrills and we'll make you dance and squirm. Appearing first, Marilyn Manson, playing their brand of gothic-industrial music. Smells Like Children is chock-full of songs about the twisted and ugly world Marilyn Manson occupy. Marilyn Manson, you've seen their T-shirts at every show you go to, and is it because their music is so good? Hell no. It's their image as a bunch of lollipop suckin', wildly costumed, serial killer worshipping freaks, who like to say over-the-top "cool" things like, "I am the god of f*#!" Next, we have Asylum Choir, a 90's version of Alice Cooper's B-movie, theatrical kitsch. *Dead Girls Don't Say No* features the Devil and an innocent girl that is lead through the depths of depravity and debauchery. Their music is aggressive, industrial dance, a cross between the Lords Of Acid and the Thrill Kill Kult. Their tongue is planted firmly in cheek as they sing songs with titles like "Do Me Dirty" and "Harder, Faster" that only hint at what their titles are suggesting. If you take your music with a dash of evil, these are two great offerings. (Nothing/Interscope) (Indebasement) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

MASQUERADE - Surface of Pain - CD

Last issue, I put the kaibosh to the **Fates Warning** "classics" re-issued disc, simply because I didn't like **Fates** in the 80's, and I sure as shit don't like 'em in the 90's. Same goes for **Queensryche**, who similarly blow of the same suckage...So now comes this disc from **Masquerade**, whose vocalist strains to sound like **Geoff Tate** or **Ray Alder** in a most sucky kinda way. **Tony Yoanson** screeches, caterwauls and generally sucks in a filthy manner reminiscent of the last bout of colitis you may have had -- i.e. poopy. While musically not completely off the wall, the overall attempt to fashion themselves after such bozos is disheartening, showing exactly what level of misery these Swedish fellas aspire to. No. No. No. No. No...NO!!! (**Metal Blade**) *D. Wood.*



THE MEATMEN

THE MEATMEN - Pope On A Rope - CD

This is not the punk rock masterpiece, ***We're The Meatmen...And You Suck!***. However, this is not the pitiful shell of **The Meatmen** I expected. The lyrics are still as poignant (though less offensive and less powerful) as those on ***Rock And Roll Juggernaut.*** If you were expecting the early **Meatmen** and you purchased this, then you are either a simp or seriously under informed. It's good to hear that **Mr. Vermulen** (sp.?) has not lost any of his vocal prowess. Unfortunately, the musical end of any band plays an important part in the total package. In this respect, **The Meatmen** are sorely lacking. It's not that skills aren't there (they are), but this is so musically dated it's nearly a cliché. (**Meat King Records**) *Pants Mulligan.*

MELT BANANA - s/t - 7"

After seeing these guys open for **mr. Bungle** I had to shell out the five bones for this one. They are a four-piece noise band from Tokyo. Three songs can be found on this little, circular, dark colored plastic gem. The longest song, "Picnic In Panic" is only 1:55. How to describe this one, hmmmm, how about the craziest, wackiest, liveliest, phunkiest, deffist, dopeist noise I have ever heard in my life. And holy bejesus, they are tighter than **Scrooge McDuck** with his bank account. It makes me wonder why it is that four kids from the land of the rising sun get it and most of America can't even buy a clue for a quarter. In short call **Skin Graft Records** in Chicago ([312]-989-9865) and order music from this band. It comes complete with lyrics and its own comic book. Tell 'em **Dave** sent you. (**Skin Graft**) *David J. Ciancio.*

MEMPHIS GOONS - Soul Mode - 7"

Four satisfying tracks by **Can**-cum-**Captain Beefheart** aficionados. Damn close to a lo-fi masterpiece, had these jackasses spent a little more time mastering the subtle nuances of the genre, this would be the 7" of the year. Stunning cover of **Archie Belle & The Drells'** Waterloo "Tighten Up." Kudos to **Rise Records** for recognizing the talent inherent in these up-and-comers. (**Rise**) *Pants Mulligan.*

THE MIGRAINES - I'm A Wuss - 7"

Relatively solid silly topical p-rock. Not all that humorous, but not all that stupid either. I don't know if I like this or not. (**Sick Duck Records**) *Pants Mulligan.*

MISERY LOVES CO. - Need Another One - CD

It's been brought to my attention lately that I gave short shrift to the **Misery Loves Co.** full-length earlier this year. While that may be true, this EP, which boils down the core of the stuff from the LP, is getting some spins at my pad currently. You get a non-LP version of "Honor Code Loyalty," an LP version of "Need Another One" and three different mixes of "Kiss Your Boots." Now, I'm not generally thrilled with the idea of three different mixes of any song (except for anything done by **Jimmy Sommerville** or **Dead Or Alive** for that matter), but it's done correctly here, and for that you should run out and hug a stranger. (**Earache**) *D. Wood.*

MOONSPELL - Wolfheart - CD

Although Portugal surely hasn't been known as the capital of anything interesting musically lately, it might be time to pause and take notice. **Moonspell** are a black, gothic metal band who transcend those rather limited descriptions and come up with this winner entitled **Wolfheart**. With production help from **Grip, Inc.** guitarist **Waldemar Sorychta**, recorded in a scant 10 days, this disc is pretty amazing. Heavy, but retaining a delicate, almost operatic vision, **Moonspell** aren't afraid to mix in traditional Portuguese melodies along with some biting metal riffage. Vocalist **Langsuyar** has a very interesting, diverse approach utilizing softer melodic vox surfing, as well as clobbering you with some ass-banging hash oily desperate screams that are guaranteed to bring out your dead. **Mantus**, **Tanngrisnir**, **Ares**, **Passionis** and **Nisroth**... Remind you of another band whose name started with a "V" and literally ruled the 80's metal scene with an iron fist? You figure it out. (**Century Media**) *D. Wood.*

MY OWN VICTIM - Burning Inside - CD

My Own Victim are a five-piece from Kentucky who've obviously grown up on Fruit Loops, **Mr. Greenjeans** and liberal doses of **Pantera**, **Biohazard**, **Prong** and a host of others. Vocalist **Victor Hillerich** has quite the salligrowler on him, reminding one of **Pantera's Philip Anselmo** or **Henry Rollins** or...well you get the picture. And it's a pretty picture I assure you. In fact, I was pleasantly surprised at how much I liked this CD. It's rough around the edges, and deeply brutal in between, which has been my motif lately. (**Century Media**) *D. Wood.*

NAILBOMB - Proud To Commit Commercial Suicide - CD

I'm really glad they decided to release this. It's all live except for the last two songs, which were the last things **Nailbomb** did. Too bad we never got to see them, any way it's all the stuff on the other one with a little more rage to it. The two extra studio songs rock like hell, especially "While You Sleep, I Destroy Your World." It makes me want to punch someone in the face because it's punching me in the nuts so hard. If you like angry, aggressive music, well this one's pretty fucking angry and aggressive. It is da bomb. Da **Nailbomb**. (**Roadrunner**) *Mazzola.*

NAPALM DEATH - Greed Killing - CD

I think this is the last band from the grindcore/death scene that I still really get into, at least with few other exceptions. Anyway, this thing rocks. They're definitely going somewhere with it instead of just growling and going faster. The growl and the speed is not missing, but it's not the same boring crap. Check it out. The full-length, ***Diatribes***, should be out in January. I'm ready. (**Earache**) *Mazzola.*

NEOTEK - Brain Over Muscle - CD

Electro-industrial music. Yep, that phrase (from a sticker on the cover) sums it up. I realize that I'm swimming in **Mike Pfeiffer's** waters, so I'm not really qualified to give you an expert opinion, but this CD has really grown on me. I mean, I don't know this stuff from Adam, it's got a groove and bite that are hard to ignore. If you're into eletro-industrial dance mayhem, then **Neotek** is probably right up your alley. (**Cleopatra**) *n. bates.*

NEW MIND - Zero to the Bone - CD

Industrial music has gone in so many directions these days, it's refreshing to see a band get back to basics and record some good, beautiful music. On their first release, **New Mind**, unleash a powerful CD with 13 tracks that all make you want to move. The tracks not only groove, they're also very powerful with eerie samples and intelligent lyrics. The lyrics are sung by a male that often sounds like **Ogre** from **Skinny Puppy** and a female vocal. Musically they're a cross between the dense, percussive beats of **Skinny Puppy** and the aggressive chanting of **Nitzer Ebb**. By remembering their elders and adding their own electronic twists, **New Mind** release an impressive debut. (**Fifth Colvmn**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

NEW WET KOJACK - s/t - CD

Hey, **Touch & Go** comes up with a decent new release. I guess there might be life in the label after all. This is a side band (NOT "project," according to the boys themselves) made up primarily of folks from **Girls Against Boys**. I'm not going to tell you this is "jazzy" or "noir-ish," but I'm positive you're gonna hear that elsewhere. What I will say that **NWK** is a lighter affair than **Girls Against Boys**, and the bass/drum interaction is the focal point of this band's sound. You get some horns and guitar on top, but, as in any worthwhile band, the beat drives the thing. **NWK** is groove-centered, and the rest adds accent to the proceedings. This group is not part of the misbegotten Cocktail Nation by any means, but you won't feel out of place snapping your fingers to them, either. I leave it to you to sort this one out. (**Touch & Go**) *C. Fuller.*

NOTHING PAINTED BLUE - The Future Of Communications - CD

You may have heard of **Franklyn Bruno** who leads this trio and is considered a "best kept secret" figure. Fair enough. This holds some decent songwriting, along the lines of an unpredictable **Unrest** and a less manic **Eugene Chadbourne**. Pretty clean pop rock played by grubby hands. Minimal and well done. (**Scat**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

PALEFACE - Raw - CD

"Raw" is right. The first song sounds like it was recorded on a boom box in a bar somewhere. Actually according to the press kit only five songs originally recorded for **Raw** survived an accident in which most of the music on the tape was erased. To compensate **Paleface** filled the rest of **Raw** "with some stuff from my bootleg tapes...something I learned from **Daniel Johnston** and passed on to **Beck**." (He is no longer on speaking terms with **Beck**). All of the music is well written - the lyrics border on the lunatic-genius-art school acid casualty variety. The studio stuff is all right, the live stuff on the other hand, clips along at a pretty good pace. If eccentric pop with folk stylings appeals to you... (**Shimmy-Disc**) *n. bates.*

PERCEPTUAL OUTER DIMENSIONS - Euphonia - CD

It's great to hear new bands stretching boundaries and making very listenable music at the same time. **P.O.D.** accomplish this on **Euphonia** by meshing trance, techno and ambient with heavy dance beats. The 16 tracks flow so well, it's hard to stop listening until all 72 minutes of the disc have played. Without expressing eroticism vocally, **P.O.D.** also display a great amount of intangible eroticism in their music, as if it exists on some higher plane, some other dimension. It's also great to see the very eye-catching erotic graphics that make up the CD booklet design. If any of this appeals to you, then pick this up, because hearing the experience is so much better than reading about it. (**Fifth Colvmn**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

THE PICKETTS - The Wicked Picketts - CD

All right! More of that rousing honky-tonk biz. Hangs on to that old-time tradition quite nicely. **The Picketts** are from the Seattle area, but well, from the latter description it's obvious that they (thankfully) don't have "*that*" sound. It's that backwoods sound of honesty that makes this disc fully loaded to the hilt with good ol' stompers. Plus their cover of **Yoko Ono's** "Walking On Thin Ice" (which works!) shows anything is possible. (**Rounder**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

RADAR BROS. - s/t - CD EP

Cross the still flatness of **Codeine** with the space rock of early **Pink Floyd** and you might get close to the **Radar Bros.** This first effort sports six decent songs that neither excite nor disappoint me, not that my expectations were set high. The publicity that came with **Radar Bros.** said they defied categorization, so I guess "outdated" isn't a category. Pass this up, unless you're having trouble sleeping. (**fingerpaint**) *Mike Pfeiffer.*

RED RED MEAT - Bunny Gets Paid - CD

On their second longplayer for **Sub Pop**, this Chicago group continues down the same general sonic trail as on their first one, but displays some growth as well. When **Red Red Meat** comes up, you're usually going to hear the **Stones** mentioned in the same breath, particularly mid-period **Stones**. That's still the deal here. However, I will agree with the band and tell you that the songs on "Bunny" are a little bit looser. It's readily apparent that there's some real jamming going on, which was not the modus operandi on "Jimmywine Majestic." Thus, what you get is a band that's spread out a bit more, which in this case is a good thing. Why? The listener is rewarded for paying attention and letting this baby sink in deeply. Are there all that many records you can say that about? (**Sub Pop**) *C. Fuller.*

ROOMFUL OF BLUES - Turn It On! Turn It Up! - CD

There are two kinds of songs here, guitar-led and horn-led. I don't particularly like the guitar songs, but that's probably because my idea of a blues guitarist is **Big Bill Broonzy**. Mind you, the guitar songs aren't bad, and they provide a breathing space between the too-hot horn songs. The horns are as big and fat and loud and swinging as anything since **Basie** died. They make this CD a joy to listen to, especially **Carl Querfurth,** the trombonist. For your next party, drop the rock and roll shit and get the people swinging to these blues. **(Bullseye Blues/Rounder)**
Scott Joyner.

ROSETTA STONE - The Tyranny of Inaction - CD

The second of this British group's full-length releases, **Rosetta Stone** has been praised by ex-**Sisters Of Mercy Wayne Hussey** and other mainstream music mags like **Spin** and **Alternative Press**. **Tyranny** is goth in all its glory, melodic and synthetically haunting, with lyrics like: "*I feel your anguish/I feel your pain,*" and "*Walk blind talking kind/ there's nothing going on in my mind.*" Originally picked up by ex-**Roxy Music** guitarist **Phil Manzanera** on the **Expression** label, **Rosetta Stone** continues to churn out treble heavy tunes to fill the void **Nitzer Ebb** and **Bauhaus** left behind. (**Cleopatra**) *Surdu.*

ROSETTA STONE

SACRED REICH - Heal - CD

Sounds pretty much like a **Sacred Reich** album. I've been a pretty long-time fan, but I'm not too sure if they've moved on at all. I don't think there's much progress going on. Don't get me wrong -- I still dig it. If you like this stuff, it's still good, but overall it's kinda just so-so. (**Metal Blade**) *Mazzola.*

SATAN'S PILGRIMS - Soul Pilgrim - CD

The addition of a Hammond M-3 (circa 1959) adds muscle, originality and heavy soul to this surf combo. The tracks without the M-3 lack the beefy tones needed to set this band apart from the rest of their stellar **Estrus** label mates. Unfortunately, the tracks without the grand old Hammond lady constitute most of the CD and tread no new ground. This is of course not terrible, as **Satan's Pilgrims** draw much of their influences from later (some would say better) instrumental combos, like **Davie Allan & The Arrows**, this makes for great B-movie Biker - Hot Rod soundtrack material. (**Estrus**) *Pants Mulligan.*

ART PAUL SCHLOSSER - My Cat Was Taking A Bath & Dead Skunk Perfume - CD

Two self-released cassettes on one CD from Madison, Wisconsin's local unique character. Every town has one. Music of **Wally Pleasant** and the lyrics of **Daniel Johnston**. Yep, me thinks this guy is legit with song titles like, "My Daddy Wore A Raccoon Hat," "The Latest Elvis Imitator" and the gem of the bunch, "The Worst Restaurant." Total giggle-fest type tunes in the pure naive form. Guitar, vocal, kazoo. Silly. *Bryan Ramirez.*

SENTENCED - Love & Death - CD

I liked this five-song excursion better than the full-length ***Amok***, and the band admits that ***Amok*** was something other than what ardent followers could expect. While certainly not an ardent follower, I can say that this new disc seems a bunch more focused and to the friggin' point, so I like it more. I even like the cover of the **William J. Idol** classic, "White Wedding." Whew! **(Century Media)**
D. Wood.

SIXTEEN DELUXE - Backfeedmagnetbabe - CD

This Austin, TX unit creates lush pop soundscapes that at times suggest an American **My Bloody Valentine**. Superb use of guitar effects/sounds and they write songs with actual hooks. Begins with an excellent cover of **Eno's** "Here Come the Warm Jets." Probably not essential in the grand scheme of things, but an admirable regional combo. (**Trance Syndicate**) *Richard Bowser.*

SORRY ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER - Aquarium Center - CD

Another healthy dose of alternarock from the PearlPilotBushJam genre. Tight and clean sounding with a heavy hanging bass, double-kick drum and Vedder-strained vocals. The sound is right on for radio right now, opening for Joan Jett in April couldn't have hurt. This DC foursome is a bit sore on being caught in the MTV trap that caused one member to purchase a 4 Non Blondes single to discover that it "sucked. There's $13.99 down the drain. But with our band, we just jam." You be the judge. (Diesel Boy) *Surdu.*

STRATOTANKER - Baby, Test The Sky - CD

At some times a more groove-oriented **Sonic Youth** rip, at others, an apoplectic attempt at experimentalism. The variety on this disc is staggering, from heavy rock to lazy jazz in one fell swoop. Surprising this isn't in the **Forced Exposure** catalog. If I don't get the next one to review, I'll probably buy it. PS, **Skirts Mulligan** digs it, too (mostly because it reminds her of **Sun Ra** mavens and **Byron Coley** faves **Fuzzhead). (Homestead)** *Pants Mulligan.*

SUPERNOVA - Ages 3 And Up - CD

Okay, imagine **Mothersbaugh** and the rest of his gang started **Devo** a couple of years ago in sunny California instead of Cleveland, then strap on the guits and let loose with their brand of "punk" (read: "new wave"). Goofy lyrics, goofy spacesuits, goofy haircuts but catchy, tight guitar-driven pop. Sure it's sort of punk, but I would classify it more as a new wave record -- and that's not meant as a rip. Not entirely original, but definitely in a niche of their own. On a scale of 1-10, I'd give it a 5.5. Look for it used or in a cut-out bin first. (**AmRep/Atlantic**) *n. bates.*

TEENGENERATE

TEENGENERATE - Smash Hits - CD

As I said, in so many words a couple of issues ago, **Teengenerate** is one of the few punk bands worth listening to. ***Smash Hits*** is a collection of the bazillion singles released previous to their ***Get Action*** LP. It's all served up with the raucous reckless abandon that makes great punk rock great, and leaves pussies like **Green Day**, etc. to gnaw on their dried up turds. **(Estrus)** *T. Jack.*

TWO LINE FILLER - Listener - CD

Here's more of that **Epitaph** wet-dream, West Coast, hyper-sensitive nice-boy rock that over-dosed itself at the Warped Festival in Pontiac that **No Use For A Name** and **Quicksand** played at. Now the questions is, how necessary it is to go any further? (**New Red Archives**)
Bryan Ramirez.

UNSANE - Scattered, Smothered & Covered - CD

Jumping to a new label, and with their last LP on **Matador** being somewhat of a disappointment, I was more than a bit skeptical about this disc. But after hearing it I'm convinced that they've regained their "old" prowess. This is a sonic attack, pure and simple. The **Unsane** has always been brutal live, and ***Scattered, Smothered & Covered*** captures rather dramatically that brutality. Taken as a whole, the **Unsane** are about as subtle as an attack dog, relentlessly pursuing, until finally catching up and knocking you down. Not for the weak-hearted, **Messrs. Spencer**, **Curran** and **Signorelli** have created a monster. (**Amphetamine Reptile**) *n. bates.*

UPPER CRUST - Let Them Eat Rock - CD

Whoever thought that gimmicks would be passé? Not me, any more. Five guys that don 17th Century white wigs that were fashionable with high-brow types, white ruffled shirts, knickers, white pancake make-up, songs that only deal with the upper class ("Rock-N-Roll Butler," "Friend of a Friend of the Working Class," "I've Got My Ascot 'n' My Dickie" ???), and they have that **AC/DC** growl about them in their music. Are they good? I ain't telling you shit. With that description, I want you to risk it all, pal. (**Upstart**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

UZEDA - 4 - CD EP

Never a hotbed of engaging rock and roll, Italy manages to push another band (the last was **Raw Power**) onto the American music scene via Mr. **Steve Albini**. Tight, sharp, strangulated rhythm and vocals show up in spades here. A lazy man's **Jesus Lizard** cannibalizing the **Pain Teens** and spitting out nothing but the bones and glandular meats. (**Touch & Go**) *Pants Mulligan.*

THE VERVE - A Northern Soul - CD

I hate to say it, but these guys are headed the wrong way. This release finds us farther from the first Verve CD and closer to some bland college rock cow pie with Stones' influences. I'll still go to great lengths to see these guys live only to see some older material, but I'm not impressed with this current offering of 12 songs. The back cover art is about the only thing I really like. (Vernon Yard) *CBH3.*

WALLSIDE - s/t - 7"

First off, bonus points for the see-through vinyl and handsome Kinko's layout - apparently maximum output with minimum funds. The music? Self-dubbed Livonia shitcore, yet more along the lines of emotional punk. Yeah, that's right, emotional punk. Five songs that make you want to dance and cry at the same time (or at least install new windows). Some of the best local talent these ears have heard in many moons. (Lonely Kid Records) *R. Alexander.*

KEVIN WELCH - Life Down Here On Earth - CD

Too country for many, too traditional to fill a slot at your local Young Country shit station, but perfect for Jamie DePolo's Progressive Torch & Twang show on Impact 89FM (Tuesdays at 8PM in Lansing). This is very likable stuff. Songwriting is something true to its nature of recognizing the importance of that honky tonk/country vein. Plenty of sass with that swift easy kick in the keester. Reminds me of an easy livin' Dwight Yoakam without any guns, just armed with a jug of shine and a sack of wildwood. I guarantee you can make friends with this one. (Dead Reckoning) *Bryan Ramirez.*

WIDER - s/t - 7"

Fluffy mix and soft vox for this Jeez-o Lizard-type crunch. Not too darn bad. Side two is a great freaky, time-changing **Tar/Jesus Lizard/Helmet** churner that keeps you sweaty palmed and at the edge of your set. Hey **Joe**! Hook these guys up with **Steve Albini** and you'll have one motherfuck of a sizzler. (**Third Gear**) *Bryan Ramirez.*

WORMHOLE - s/t - 10"

Hard to believe this band is from Dublin, Ireland. My guess would have been somewhere real close to **Thurston Moore's** practice space. Better than **Sonic Youth**, but mining the same vein. The band **Wormhole** from Pittsburgh, PA is much, much better than this, punk rock, too. (**Roadtrip Records**) *Pants Mulligan.*

YOUNG URBAN FAILURES - Bare the Scars of Love - CS

Will S. was a fixture in the Kalamazoo scene throughout most of the '80s and his ongoing project **Latchkey Kids** was helped out some by both **Harry K.** and myself. Since moving to Ferndale, **Will** has continued his musical endeavors and on this tape has put together a reasonable power trio which also features **ETCH** staffer **D. Wood**. Emotionally **Will** mines a territory somewhere between **Lou Barlow** and **Mark Edwards** (lots of relationship issues), while musically rooted primarily in 60's psychedelia and folk-rock. Although it at times veers toward being amorphous, this work represents another chapter in the life of this idiosyncratic genius. (**Die Weisse Rose**)
Richard Bowser.

YOUR MOM - s/t - 7"

Understated **Helmet** musicianship via **Melvins** power. Liked this much more at first listen, now this seems slightly cliched and maybe even deserves the dreaded "***Bleach*-era Nirvana**" tag. Stunning sleeve, though. I'd probably buy it (and not feel ripped). **(Vagrant Records)**
Pants Mulligan.

LAURIE Z. - Life Between The Lines - CD

Instrumental, melody-oriented borefest. Dull, uninspired music expertly played by fine musicians (I'm not being sarcastic). You could play this unobtrusive disc while having sex with someone you know well. (**Zebra Productions**) *Scott Joyner.*

V/A - Belts, Heels, and Flying Feathers - CD

Hey Rocky, watch me pull a rabbit out of my hat...silly rabbit! K is for kids! Peter Pan records grows up. K is for big kids and K is for...Karp - rock and definitely roll back through the history of skate with "Connect Four." One problem though, it sounds a lot like Superchunk, the only difference is that Karp haven't crossed that imaginary line that the underground has defined as "selling out." At the moment, Karp are still one of those bands that are kool to listen to because *"I liked them back when nobody even knew who they were."* Hurry up and get the full Karp LP before they make the same mistake that Superchunk has. K is for Softies. "He Will Never Have To Know" is as cute as a button. Girlie vocals backed with a gentle hula blues guitar. Chicks dig Softies, unfortunately most guys will use "C.K.M." to lure naive young ladies into their dorm so they can get...(the things you wear around your neck in Hawaii) Second side: Alan Martian etc. Boring monotone Pavement-esque stuff. Short and to the point, whatever that might be. Wandering Lucy is the Softies with a Casio keyboard drum machine. Her voice is sweet, but altogether the song is more annoying than neat or cute. The Halo Benders can really fly...out the window of my car that is. As monotonous, boring and repetitious as their self-titled song. The Make-Up are believed to be made up of ex-Nation Of Ulysses guys and friends. Do you believe it? Are you a "Believer?" "Believer" is a fun little gimmick using catch phrases such as that. See Pavement's "Conduit." These songs are both amusing for awhile, however, I hear that this is nothing like the other stuff on the Make-Up full-length. I'd have to hear it to "believe" it. Timothy Brock and His Orchestra are the best thing K Records has to offer in my opinion. Brook's orchestration is classic. The spooky theme is like something Danny Elfman would have added to the Edward Scissorhand's soundtrack. K is for disappointment. No Daniel Johnston silly songs on this year's agenda for K Records. Were there ever? Who knows? One thing is certain, the Halo Benders - a real career ender. They were right! The only thing cute about this is the cover. (K) *Shawn Wernette.*

V/A - Does The Word Duh Mean Anything To You? - CD

A fairly impressive collection of newer bands. Since this is a British label I assume that most are from the UK, but I'm not sure because it doesn't say. Each unit has two tracks. Since all are of at least some interest I'll give the run down:

Dart: A subdued sound, one track (is) especially bleak lyrically. A tendency toward Vedderism that doesn't, however, completely mar it.

18th Dye: A more brittle sound, probably semi-improvised. Female vocals on one track sound like 17 Pygmies or Fourwaycross. Good dynamics and flow. One of the most advanced and enjoyable groups on this disc.

Magic Hour: Folky pop that doesn't do so much for me. Some nice guitar distortion sounds at times.

Urusei Yatsura: One track *Goo*-era Sonic Youth, one slow Pavement. Go figure.

The Bardots: Explores the cheesier side of the Velvet Underground among other things. Not overtly offensive however, and fits the context of the disc.

Slipstream: Synth-pop with a ska flavor. No, well, bluespunk like 999 or something almost.

Bardo Pond: The chronic, improvisational space drone. The most interesting and adventurous unit featured here. Sonic landscapes played with feeling.

Kirk Lake: A comic interlude. Spoken word, one with hipster background music.

Disco Inferno: Dark pop; almost mid-period Savage Republic or maybe even For Against perhaps as a reference, but with a more 90's sensibility. Strong also in its veering toward a more ambient focal point at times. Another highlight of this collection.

A well-sequenced and generally listenable compilation. (Che) *Richard Bowser.*

V/A - A Slice of Lemon - Dbl. CD

Lookout and **Kill Rock Stars** team up to give. us this monster of a comp. 39 bands from both labels dish up 39 unique "flavors" of punk. The differences are dramatic to say the least. So many killer songs--so many killer bands, some well-known--some up-n-comers. Acts range from **Mr. T Experience** to **Pansy Division** to **Fitz of Depression** to **Mary Lou Lord**. Again, diversity is the operative word here. Both labels should be applauded for releasing this winner. A most impressive release. (**Kill Rock Stars / Lookout Records**) *n. bates.*

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VIEW!?

CINEMA

"LEAVING LAS VEGAS" R

Nicolas Cage is certainly on a roll. Last year he starred in **John Dahl's** terrific ***Red Rock West*** and earlier this year in the unfairly maligned **Barbet Schroeder** remake of ***Kiss Of Death***, and now he stars as a washed up screenwriter named Ben Sanderson in the astonishing new film from director **Mike Figgis**, ***Leaving Las Vegas***.

Ben is in the middle of a downward spiral, once a successful screenwriter now a pathetic joke amongst his former colleagues, who've long ago realized he's nothing but trouble. When he is finally fired he takes it to heart and decides to cash in his severance, clean out his house and go to Las Vegas, where he won't be bothered while he literally drinks himself to death. Before he leaves town he visits his favorite liquor store, happily fills his shopping cart with fifths and half-gallons of a variety of hooch, and heads for Vegas. Upon arrival he nearly runs over a high class call girl at an intersection, played smartly by **Elisabeth Shue**. She calmly berates him for his obvious lack of attention, demands an apology, then walks off into the neon paradise.

Ben rents a room at a cheap motel and begins his decent, which he figures will take four or five weeks. His drinking is very serious, his mission if you will, literally pouring the stuff down his throat bottle after bottle. Portraying a drunk, let alone a suicidal drunk, is no easy task considering the stereotypes and clichés that could have been employed by a lesser actor, but **Nicolas Cage** does some of his best work yet in the role of Ben. One night he spots the prostitute he nearly ran over and begs her to come back to his room for what she thinks will be the usual drunken trick. It becomes obvious that Ben isn't in any shape to have sex, he is much more interested in talking and just being close. These are both emotionally damaged characters, each dealing with their pain in distinctly different ways, but somehow still functional. The part of the call girl, Sera, is fleshed out by **Elisabeth Shue**. She takes a character that audiences would normally have a problem finding any empathy for, and makes us care about what happens to her deeply. This was a difficult role for **Shue**, sister of **Andrew Shue** (known to you soapsters out there as "Billy" on the Fox Network's **Melrose Place**). She accepted only 10% of her normal fee--as did the rest of the cast--and is simply a knockout as Sera. It was not an easy task portraying a prostitute with a heart, the sex scenes were incredibly difficult and the heartbreaking rape scene took an emotional toll on her as well as her husband/director, **Davis Guggenheim**.

In a pivotal scene, Ben has moved in with Sera and explains that there is only one thing she cannot do and that is ask him to stop drinking, to which she agrees making him agree similarly regarding her chosen profession. Director **Figgis**, whose previous films include ***Stormy Monday*** and ***Internal Affairs***, doesn't flinch from this rough material. It could have been easily prettied up for Hollywood, but **Figgis** respects his material enough to know when to let it ride. The ending is so un-Hollywood that I'm sure all the major studios ran from the project. Credit United Artists for releasing the film, although the distribution is a little weak that will change when word gets around of how good ***Leaving Las Vegas*** is.

With an ensemble cast, that includes surprise appearances by **Lou Rawls**, **Laurie Metcalf** (from ABC's "**Roseanne**") and comedian **Richard Lewis**, **Figgis** has surrounded himself with a talented bunch of craftspeople who care about their work enough to know when they're working with a talented director. "Best Actor" and "Actress" awards for **Nicolas Cage** and **Elisabeth Shue**, and a "Best Picture" award are conceivable, filmmaking of this caliber needs to be celebrated. I absolutely loved **Leaving Las Vegas**, one of the very best films of 1995. Do not miss it. -- ***D. Wood***.

VIDEO

FIVE STAR FILM OF THE MONTH

by EJ Hamacher

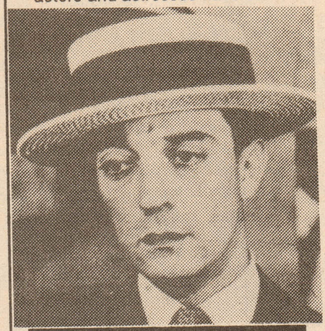
"The Art of Buster Keaton" (10 volumes-video)

Hypothetical Film Script for **Buster Keaton**, surreal comedian.

Opening credits. Iris out of extreme close up of **Buster's** eye. He is seated in a theater reading the newspaper and talking loudly to no one in particular. Cut to shots of the crowd around him looking disapprovingly. First is two old ladies who turn to start talking themselves. Next is an old man and a young boy. The boy steals part of the man's candy as he turns to look at **Buster**. The man slowly turns back to the screen and absently grabs at the air where the stolen candy had been in his other hand. Cut to **Buster**, still talking, oblivious to the crowd and only throwing occasional glances to the movie on the screen. Cut to a man sitting to the left of a young couple deep in embrace. The man is trying to watch the film but ends up glaring at **Buster** who is on the opposite side of the couple. The young lovers come up for air and the boy notices the man staring. Thinking he is staring at them, he starts to shout at the man. The man, totally enraged, flies out of his seat and a fight starts.

Cut to the usher, a diminutive man, who comes rushing up in a uniform a bit too big for him. He taps the fighting boy on the shoulder with his flashlight to get his attention, but this action instead sends the girl into a protective rage. She takes a swipe at the usher but missed his head and only whips off his hat. Cut to the hat flying in the dark theater. Cut to a huge man who sits in the front row with his very tiny girlfriend just as the hat hits him in the back of the head. He stands up and towers over the seats. Looking back to the scuffle in the seats above him, he shouts with anger for them to settle down. Cut to the fighting foursome. They abruptly stop and sit down immediately. Cut to the screen, where the suave actor and beautiful actress have stopped in the middle of their scene. Cut to **Buster** still gabbing away, oblivious to the action. Cut to the giant man who grows more and more angry.

In full shot, follow the giant man as he slowly walks up the steps to stand right behind **Buster's** chair. Individual cut-aways to the other audience members as they all stare aghast at the confrontation about to take place. Cut to the movie screen where all the actors and actresses have come to the screen to watch.


BUSTER KEATON

Cut to **Buster** who continues to talk to no one while he holds the newspaper. The giant man looms behind him and raises his fists together as if to totally crush **Buster's** head. Slowly, before the giant can swing, a third hand comes up from between the newspaper and **Buster**. The third hand holds a gun pointed directly at the giant man. **Buster** pulls back the paper and we see that a sick woman lies in his lap. As **Buster** continues talking we realize it is the woman that he was talking to, explaining to her the movie which she can't see. Cut to the audience members and the screen actors and actresses as they discuss this new discovery between themselves. The sick woman suddenly fires the gun into the air. Cut to everyone as they snap back into silence. The sick woman fires the gun again. In full shot, everyone rushes out of the theater in a crazy pandemonium. On the screen the actors and actresses also run far back into the sets and disappear.

Cut to **Buster**, who picks up the sick woman as he stands up. In full shot, he carries her to the front of the cinema seats, jumps down, and lays her on a cot laid out in the orchestra pit. Cut to a close-up of her pale, but beautiful face as she lays her head on a pillow. Cut to a close up of **Buster** giving a slight look of sympathy and affection. Cut to **Buster** as he backs up away from the cot still staring at the woman's face. Cut to close-up of her as she slowly closes her eyes. Cut to **Buster** still staring but turning to sneak away, as not to wake her. Grabbing what he thinks is the wall to the pit, but what is really a rack of different cymbals and gongs, he starts to climb it. Half way up he finally turns, realizes where he is and comes crashing to the ground. Totally entangled in the cymbal rack he flails around, crashing and breaking most of the cymbals and gongs. He finally stands up and quickly turns to look at the sick woman. Cut to a shot of her just as she slips through the doorway leading out of the pit and under the screen. Cut to **Buster** as he runs to follow.

Full shot as **Buster** runs full speed into the next room and can't stop himself as he flies into a large pool. He stares down through the water and sees the sick woman settling in to a fully set table at the bottom of the pool. In full shot, **Buster** swims down to join her and tips his hat as he takes a seat. In a series of sight gags, he tries to take a piece of meat out from under a hooded platter in the middle of the table. The awkward meat constantly tries to float away through the water. Barely managing, he tries to cut the meat on his plate and give a piece to the woman across from him. Finally frustrated as all the meat floats away, he takes out a cigarette and tries desperately to light a match. Suddenly he looks up.

Cut to the woman, again holding the gun, as she aims it right at the camera (actually **Buster's** point of view). She fires and misses **Buster**, but the bullet hits the lens and sets a big crack down the side. Cut to full shot, with the crack still on the camera lens. The water appears to be seeping out of the crack and within a minute, **Buster** and the sick woman are standing at the bottom of a totally drained pool. Cut to a close-up of the woman, who is furious. Full shot as she storms through yet another small door in the far end of the pool bottom.

Cut to shot of **Buster** emerging a little more carefully through the doorway into a city street, just outside the movie house. He sees the woman from behind as she stands out in the middle of the street. Cut quickly to a car racing down the street. Cut back to **Buster** as he panics and runs out to save the woman from certain death. Suddenly the woman turns and shoots at the speeding car, cracking the windshield. Cut to inside the car, with the crack positioned roughly the same as the previous crack in the lens. The car swerves and is now running right towards **Buster**. In full shot, **Buster** amazingly side-steps the car, grabs onto the door handle and swings himself inside the car. Cut to the driver. It is the giant man from the theater. A fight breaks out between **Buster** and the man. Cut to full shot of the car in its breath-taking flight in and out of busy traffic, narrowly missing a speeding train and numerous cops, and eventually crashing into a large truck hauling pillows. The two men, still fighting come crashing out of the door of the car into a cloud of feathers.

Cut to a close-up of **Buster** struggling against his much greater opponent in the cloud of feathers. Suddenly **Buster** is pinned down and the giant man starts pushing a pillow over his face, choking him. As he starts to gag and struggle, dissolve to **Buster** in the cinema struggling with his newspaper which has come to rest over his face. As he fully frees himself, cut to a fuller shot to reveal the sick woman sitting next to him. Cut to close-up as she looks at him disapprovingly and "shhs" him. Cut to close-up of **Buster** as he straightens up and looks back sheepishly towards the movie screen. Cut to extreme close-up of **Buster's** eyes widening in horror. Cut to screen, where the actress has pulled out a gun. She fires and the bullet cracks the screen. The film ends.

"CINEMA BEER GOGGLES" (VHS) Approx. 45 min.

Okay, here's the deal. There are 16 music videos by some of the hottest p-rock bands around today. You get the legendary **CIRCLE JERKS**, **VANDALS** and **NOFX**, along with young Turks **NO USE FOR A NAME, FACE TO FACE**, **THE GOOPS**, **88 FINGERS LOUIE** and **JUGHEAD'S REVENGE**. A couple of the videos, the **CIRCLE JERKS'** "I Wanna Destroy You" and **THE GOOPS'** "Booze Cabana" have received play on MTV. Of all the vids in this collection, my faves are "49/61" by **JUGHEAD'S REVENGE** and "M + M's" by **BLINK 182**. Lots of entertainment value for you p-rock mavens and a worthy purchase. (**Hopeless**) *n. bates.*

"THE 12 COMMANDMENTS" (VHS) Approx. 45 min.

Ever since the demise of "Headbanger's Ball" there has been a suspicious lack of heavy metal/hard rock whatever-you-want-to-call-it videos on MTV. Regardless of how you feel about MTV, **Ricki Rachtman** or the content of the lamented program, it was the only national outlet for videos by bands like **GWAR**, **MELVINS**, **CANNIBAL CORPSE**, **DEATH** and other more traditional metal acts like **IRON MAIDEN**, **EXODUS** and **JUDAS PREIST.** So with this important niche not currently being filled, various artist videos, like ***The 12 Commandments*** from **Metal Blade**, will have to do. And this is a fine one, featuring videos from **MERCYFUL FATE**, **BROKEN HOPE**, **SKREW**, **FATES WARNING**, **GWAR**, **CHEMLAB** and a great clip from **GRIP, INC.** for "Ostracized" off their recent ***Power Of Inner Strength*** CD. So, if you find yourself a little nostalgic for **Ricki** on Saturday night around midnight, you might wanna grab this. (**Metal Blade**) *D. Wood.*

GEEK

Music CD's with CD-ROM data

commentary

by *Carl Hoch*

INSIGHT 23 Obsess CD-ROM

Now this is a CD-ROM that is easy to use. Pop 'er in the ol" oven and double-click the filename in Windows' file manager and it starts right up. Cool graphics and throbbing techno-industrial beats appear right before your eyes. A Mac version is also included. I really liked the interface and the graphics. The menu provides 3 song clips, 8 lyric sheets, band info and photos and has some nice features and effects. The music (tracks 2-11) was not as impressive to me, but maybe you mighta like dis. Contact the band at **http://process.usc.edu/i23/** or **Fifth Colvmn@cyberden.com**. **(FIFTH COLVMN).**

THE BEST OF MIND / BODY Electro-Industrial Music from the Internet CD-ROM

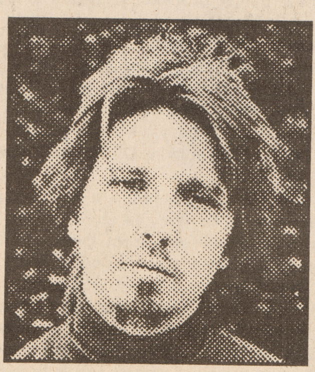
This CD doesn't contain any multimedia CD-ROM presentations or artwork, but it does have some Internet connection software (for Mac or Windows) that allows calling the "cyberden" with your modem. A word of caution: this CD requires a PHD in computer science to make anything happen at all, so be forewarned. There is a "Read Me" file with lengthy instructions which really should be handled by an installation program (which is not included). Also, the phone number for cyberden was out of service when I called it, so I was left feeling quite frustrated and generally pissed off. And the included Web address only turned up an "under construction" logo. Like the other CD-ROM's, this one has computer data on Track 1 and music on Track 2 through whatever. The music is actually a compilation of various artists such as **TRANCE**, **SNOG**, **IPECAC LOOP**, **SPHERE LAZZA**, **SOMA HOLIDAY** and others. I found this CD more compelling because of the variety of artists and styles. However, I am still hassling with the software and modem connection. **(FIFTH COLVMN).**

Etch Sketch:

SCOTT CAMPBELL

BY DAN LAMAR

Scott Campbell is the sort of guy Iggy Pop greets with "We know each other, right?" They didn't at the time. Most Detroit musicians of note do know Scott or, to quote Chad Smith of the Chili Peppers, "I don't know him, but I know who he is."



Scott started writing poetry at age seven and songs at eight, but it wasn't until he was twelve that he started writing rock & roll. Since then, he's learned six and twelve string guitar, drums, sax, oboe, vibes, clarinet, keyboards, bass, recording studio engineering and production, all before he was old enough to vote. Some of this came in handy when given the chance to back other singers, such as playing drums for Tiny Tim and keyboards for the last performance of Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels. Most of his time has been spent performing under his own name, from CBGB in New York to The Avalon Ballroom in Chicago. He's also appeared in two films; "Hoffa", and "Mirror Mirror". The latter also featured Scott's song "I Am An Accident Waiting To Happen" in the movie and on the soundtrack CD. "Accident" ended up on heavy rotation at 89X and got wider exposure through College Media Journal's "Certain Damage" anthology CD.

Campbell spent '93 and '94 reviving his original band The Sillies for personal rather than professional reasons. A live album entitled "Public Enema Number One" was released on cassette in early '94. The Sillies disbanded following a headline concert in Grand Rapids on New Year's Eve 1994. A retrospective album of their eighteen year history will be released early next year on vinyl in Europe. An American punk compilation called "Punker Than Your Mom" will also be out next year with a version of The Sillies' most popular song "Love You To Death".

Scott's most recent release is "Jackie" ("I Dreamt Of Her") on the newly released "Schauplatz Guitar" CD. It's about as far from the raucous punk of The Sillies as you could imagine. "Jackie" features a high, plaintive vocal Scott has always saved in the past for backround vocals. No one, including his own father, could recognize his voice on the recording. The CD also includes "Apparition" by The Sillies and songs by The Motor Dolls, Brothers From Another Planet, and ten other acts, some from as far away as France. Other than contemplating a move to New York, Scott has no plans whatsoever for the future. What plans the future may have for Scott is anybody's guess.

STUCK IN LUDINGTON, FULL OF ANGST

or

Ludington: Alternative Vacation Spot for Alternative College Students by travelogue correspondent

Bat Guano

(Editor's note: On the advise of Mr. Guano's attorney, all names in the following, except for the author's, have been reduced to single initials. Also, all geographical information was taken from the 1941 edition of Collier's World Atlas and Gazetteer.)

We ended up at a corner on Ludington's main drag, alternately giddy, fatigued, and desperate from our day-long drinking binge, window shopping, and frustrated attempts at contacting a kind soul who would rescue us from that isolated, bar-filled town. The night air definitely smelt of teen spirit as the cruisers went up and down and around the block - nothing much else for the young people to do on a Friday night in this godforsaken settlement on the coast of Lake Michigan.

They stared at us as they passed - who could blame them? We were four very freakish current and former college students, obviously alien to their subculture.

"Whatsamatter? Mom hasn't come to pick you up yet?" A teen girl from daddy's convertible.

"We're waiting for your mom, babe!"

But wait - we're getting ahead of ourselves here. . . .

Money is tight for the 90's college student, hindering the fun and games to be had exploring the highways and byways of America. Seventy years ago, Joe College could grab a flask of bathtub gin, throw on his raccoon coat, jump in his old diehard **Flivver** and, soon as you could say "Twenty-three skiddo!" take off for adventure.

If you tell that to a college kid today, he/she'll say, "Huh?" This is because he/she doesn't know the real thrill of a road trip. The student is either too poor to own a car or is convinced that travel means a thousand dollar package deal to Daytona Beach.

As long as he/she has a car, a few bucks, and a willingness to see the world in its raw state, today's twentysomethings can drive straight into the guts of America and experience a completely twisted adventure.

This is what I and a few colleagues did last March. We spent the day at the lovely little lakeside town of Ludington, located in Mason County, halfway between Grand Rapids and Traverse City.

The day we spent, however, was not in our plans. The plans called for us to go all the way up to Frankfurt, near Traverse City, where we were to carouse for the entire weekend with our old associate, K.

We left Kalamazoo at around 8:30 a.m. M. provided the transportation, a white **Grand Am**. D. rode shotgun and H. and I were in the back. We were all in a freakish mood - too freakish for that early in the morning. We were excited about the prospect of meeting our old college chum K.

K. had worked with us when we controlled the local college radio station. We had all been DJs, but, out of all of us, K. was the most alternative. He was into **Nirvana** before they hit paydirt. He was Kalamazoo's **Kurt Cobain**, very angry and deep. (1995 note: K. did not kill himself. He has disappeared off the face of Michigan, after threatening to move to Hollywood to become a screenwriter.) He graduated last year and went up to Frankfurt to spin **Neil Diamond** tunes for an adult contemporary station.

We passed his latest letter around in the car. It was a cry for help, filled with profanity and satanic symbols. We had to save him, at least for a weekend.

"We're all gonna die. This'll be the black box they'll find at the crash site . . ." I said this into my **Panasonic** micro-cassette recorder, model **RN-102**. An instrument such as this is highly recommended over ordinary cameras - which take one image out of the context of the flow of events and therefore give a highly selective view of reality - or video cameras - which are too godawful expensive. With a tape recorder the college student can cheaply preserve a flow of sounds from his/her experience.

Listening to the tape I hear M. bragging about his experience in the **"Tonight Show"** studio audience, wind rushing past the windows, odd pseudo-European folk music playing on the deck, D. suddenly screaming **"Ted Nugent!"** to highway construction workers for no apparent reason.

"Hey, mothertrucker!" D. to a passing semi.

"We're all gonna die . . ." Maybe I'm a pessimist, but it's taken years of training.

We stopped at McDonalds for an early brunch on the outskirts of Grand Rapids. While we waited in line, I tried to explain my theory on the isolated people of northern Michigan. The farther north, the more separated from civilization Michiganders are. They are surrounded by the Great Lakes. The only people from the outside world they meet are tourists, whom they derisively call "Fudgies" (from their patronage of Mackinac's world famous fudge shops). They are, to put it euphemistically, a bit more down to earth than a college student from Kalamazoo. (1995 note: After connections have been found between the Oklahoma bombing and militia freaks in Michigan, this theory holds frightening weight.)

My companions brushed my advise off. H. and M. were being paranoid, warning me about talking loudly about Michigan rednecks while in the midst of them, and D. was becoming overly excited about the high-chair trays printed with an unusually psychedelic design featuring Ronald McDonald, the Hamburgler, Mayor McCheese, etc.

"Look at this sh--! This'd freak a kid out!"

M. and I were the first out of Mickey-D's and to his car. The others were slow in coming. M. impatiently started the car and pulled up to the door. He said he had an appointment to get his hair done at 11:00 a.m. by an old friend who worked in a hair salon in Ludington.

Yeah, cool. Stop at Ludington, walk around while M. gets his hair cut, make it up to Frankfurt in time to snatch K. from his shift at **WBNZ**.

D. and H. burst from McDonalds and jump in the car, screaming "GO! TAKE OFF! DRIVE! GET OUTTA HERE!" M. reacts, takes the Grand Am out of the parking lot as they shut the doors. Safely on the highway, D. pulls his new trophy from underneath his leather jacket - the Mcdonald's high-chair tray. Bad karma - at that point, we were dangerously overloaded.

We made it to Ludington without incident. Things were looking up. We were on time for M.'s appointment. The sun was beginning to break from the slate clouds of early March to shine on the facades of the single-story buildings lining the main drag. D. had stopped screaming out the window.

Then, in the center of town, M. began to curse in panic at his dashboard instruments.

"The goddamn oil light's on!"

We pulled over and popped the hood. We stared at the engine. When we realized that hypnotism wouldn't fix the problem, we made plans to rendezvous at the hair salon in a couple of hours. M. slowly drove his car to the nearest service station, D., H. and I walked in search of food.

We walked into a restaurant - a nice, homestyle, family restaurant. The families stared at us as we found a table furthest away from them. The cook popped his head out to stare. The waitress stiffly, nervously, took our order.

The other two didn't notice, but I did. I became conscious of how different from the townsfolk we were, how freaklike we looked. Or at least how freaklike H. and D. were - H. with his goatee and long frizzy hair ringing his bald head, grunting about ordering me a "*pork sandwich in a dirty ashtray*," and D. with his black leather coat and long hair put in a bun, pointing and loudly saying,

"Look! An eight-track tape player! Jeez, what the f---!"

D. had a point, though. An eight-track tape player in full view inside a business establishment - it was a sign. It would reappear.

The food came, shutting them up for a time, luckily. We ate, paid our bill, and left - all the time . . . the eyes . . . watching.

With some time on our hands, we decided to get some shopping done. Not ordinary tourist type shopping though, where one either buys souvenir trash or items found in any mall in the nation. We were looking to purchase the essence of our location, items that screamed Ludington.

D. pointed out a used bookstore, the **Book Cellar**, located within the **Ludington Photographic Center**. The elderly woman merchant led us to the back of the photo shop, to a dark stairwell hidden behind curtains. She flipped a light switch, and bid us to descend.

Our hearts were gleeful with mischief - an underground bookstore! Full of rare copies of **Howl**, **Naked Lunch**, **The Anarchist's Cookbook**! Groovy!

We entered its dank confines. Music was playing, **Aaron Neville** and some other guy doing a remake of "Everybody Plays the Fool."

"Look! An eight-track! I don't believe this sh--!"

D., as usual, observantly pointed out the odd. The music was coming from the same model eight-track system we saw at the restaurant.

We rummaged through the books - thousands of paperbacks and cheap hardcovers, most pre-1980, chronicles of forgotten ages.

The lady tried not to flinch when we came up laden with our purchases. D. had **The Pocket Book of Boners**, a 1943 classic featuring the early illustrations of **Theodor Geisel**. H. got **Booze**, printed in 1967 and featuring drink recipes and loads of rainbow-colored ersatz **Peter Max** illustrations. I purchased **A Primer on Communism**, an historical work which helped us win the Cold War. We also got gifts for K. sure to inspire a nostalgia for his childhood - books on **Shawn Cassidy**, **the Fonz**, **John Travolta** and **the Bee Gees**.

As we walked down the street, in search of more excitement, I ruminated on the strange town of Ludington. There was an odd timelessness to it - whatever the hell that means. It was a feeling reinforced by the eight-track sightings, the used bookstore, the bars found on every block - it was a flotsam and jetsam kinda town. The detritus from the past five decades had floated around the Great Lakes for a while to wash up on this odd spot of shoreline.

Meanwhile, D. and H. were babbling about forming a supergroup made up of the **Bee Gees** and **U2** - the **UGEES**. They began singing "Night Fever" in disturbing falsetto. They began calling me **Bat Bono Vox**. The spirit of Ludington had taken over their souls.

We spent the rest of that early afternoon in similar, surreal, fashion. We rummaged the town. We visited a two-story brick warehouse built in the nineteenth century. It was being used as storage for the estate of a man who never threw anything away. He had passed on, and his son was trying to sell it all, piece by piece. Magazines from the '30s to the '70s, nameless rusty tools, knickknacks spanning generations - we were overwhelmed. D. got a Dr. Grabow pipe, H. a bust/bank of **General Eisenhower**, I nothing.

And of course we had to hit the local **Salvation Army** store. This was pallid in comparison to the rest of our finds, but it did yield up an **Ed McMahon's Tonight Show Game**. The rulebook was missing, but we anticipated playing the game later that evening, drinking heavily and making up our own rules.

Eventually we reached the edge of town, wandering into a field covered with dried weeds and Pabst Blue Ribbon cans. We shuffled through, braced against the March wind, to the Lake. We stood on the rocky shore and marveled at the mass of water that separated our state from the rest of civilization, the only link being the docked ferry **SS Badger**, floating just a few hundred yards south of us.

I looked down and saw a skull. It was long and narrow with long canines. H. picked it up, barked twice, and put it in his bag.

Can life get any more surreal??? Well, yeah.

Find out how surreal in the eerie, desolate, drunken conclusion of ***Stuck in Ludington, Full of Angst: 'I Feel Like I'm in a Charles Bukowski Story'***

`ZINES

Adolf Chicken Comix And Stories #1 & 2

Here's a decent pocket-sized rag out of our beloved state of Michigan. Great story revolving around one heartless **Adolf Chicken**, who runs a "successful" restaurant. The clincher is its main product of consumption is chicken itself. Yes, a chicken who sells his own "race" for chow. That's all that'll be said considering you will write this guy for his great art and other stories connected to the main character. Issue 1 and 2 are available for $1.50 a pop. (**Adolf Chicken Comix** c/o Frank Unruh 1929 Huizen SW Wyoming, MI 49509) **Bryan Ramirez**.

Ballbuster Vol. 1 No. 1 48pp. $3.25

Very professional looking metal 'zine from Louisville, Kentucky that features an interesting chat with **Gus Chambers** of **Grip, Inc.** Well laid out, smartly written...certainly worth your attention. (**Ballbuster** c/o **Sinbad Productions**) **D. Wood**.

Banana Peel Buzz August '95 12pp free

12 pages, 20 reviews, **Green Day** mentioned eight times. Enough said. (**Banana Peel Buzz** c/o Karl Hill 7702 Larissa LN. Laurel, MD 20707) **Scott Joyner**.

Casheirs du Cinemart #4 45pp. $1.00

This is evidently issue #4 of this Metro Detroit area 'zine, and it's all about movies, videos and even contains a silly lil' interview with **Rudy Ray Moore**. **Mike Barnett** is the editor, and if he would be so kind and please send all back issues to me (c/o **ETCH**), I would be most appreciative. One of the better 'zines I've read. Pick it up. (**Casheirs du Cinemart** POB 2401 Riverview, MI 48192) **D. Wood**.

8-Track Mind #8

Yet another mind boggling issue. **Russ Forster's** personal crusade to immortalize the 8-track strikes a familiar chord with all of those who will not (and probably cannot) allow a viable and thoroughly enjoyable medium to die. We all have our vices, I collect music, Atari crap, Intellivision cartridges and other antiquated junk. **Russ** collects 8-tracks. If we all were so organized and focused, this mighty U.S. of A. wouldn't be so damned dumb. Whatever. (**8-Track Mind** POB 90 East Detroit, MI 48021) **Pants Mulligan**.

Heshen Aggression #1 45pp. $1.00

And now for the other side of the coin, this waste of time is just plain awful. This is from Grand "Whitey" Rapids and is put out by a moron named **Skeeter** who has a band called **Vomitose**, named after one of **GG Allin's** tattoos. Well, isn't that clever. **Skeeter** has eight different, exciting t-shirt designs he would like to show you for your consideration. This issue features "in-depth" interviews with each of his bandmates. They get a chance to humor us with their razor-sharp wit, unfortunately they're all so witless it doesn't really work. **Skeeter**, you should spend more time concentrating on your day job. (**Heshen Aggression** c/o Skeeter Box 9561 Wyoming, MI 49509) **D. Wood**.

Kit 'Zine (Vol. 2 No. 6) 23 pp. $1.00

Another 'zine loaded for bear. Paoli, PA's **James D. Harvey** and crew cram all kinds of stuff into this baby: band interviews, music and 'zine reviews, poetry, classifieds, opinion pieces, an essay, contact names and they tack on ***The Connection*** at the end. Tons o' stuff for a mere George Washington, gang. The writing ain't the best, but then again neither is mine. A definite "bathroom" reader. (**Kit 'Zine** c/o James D. Harvey 27 E. Central Ave. R5 Paoli, PA 19301-1358) **n. bates.**

Out Of Bounds #4 74 pp. $3.00

Politics play a large a large role in this informative magazine from Arlington, Virginia. **Tom Wheeler** and Co. have an impressive amount of information for those of you who prefer substance over glitz. The politics of **Out of Bounds** are decidedly leftist with anarchist leanings. The articles are excellently written and well thought out, but what impresses me is that their writers have taken the time to footnote their pieces giving the reader an opportunity to check the author's veracity. Most importantly this issue has a story on the 'zine explosion in this country and how it effects the underground, as well as reviewing numerous magazines of all types from across the land. Toss in an equally large number of music and book reviews and you get the complete package. Impressive. (**Out Of Bounds** PO Box 5108, Arlington, VA 22205) **n. bates.**

The Politically Incorrect Journal #1 $1.75

I'll let **Jonathan D. Stone**; publisher, editor and sole writer, speak for himself.

"If you don't understand what this zine is about after reading it, then you're totally out of it." (A picture of **Mr. Stone** abuts this sentence.)

"Censorship sucks."

"These are a few letters that have been sent to some local newspapers. I decided to print them here because the things these people wrote make sense." (Followed by photocopies of letters to the editor from various newspapers.)

"To stop the spread of Clintonism, here are a few things you can do... Keep on reading ***The Politically Incorrect Journal.*** That ought to piss him off more than anything."

Doubtless, this amazingly arrogant and ignorant Xerox sheet annoys me more than it ought to because it reminds me of the kind of thing I could have put out when I was in high school. I recognize the voice and motive and am moved by a patrician urge to give **Mr. Stone** some advice: Take more time on your writing. Think first. Cultivate a little humility. Understand that great ideas demand depth of thought, and sometimes complexity of argument, not a series of boastful pontificating. And, most especially, read more. If you really want to understand politics and government, force your way through **Edmund Burke**, **Alexander Hamilton** and the like. Learn from your betters. (***The Politically Incorrect Journal*** PO Box 771 Grand Haven, MI 49417) **Scott Joyner.**

Psycho Moto Zine

Very high school-ish zine with some snappy writing and cartoons. It only costs 32 cents. (***Psycho Moto 'Zine*** c/o Ethan Minsker 45 Ave. B#2 New York, NY 10009) **Pants Mulligan.**

Qiviut #2 24 pp. 50 cents or stamps

A nifty lil' personal 'zine from Portage, Michigan--the young women who've put this together are intelligent and humorous. I've been accused by some of my peers as being too "negative" as to the talents of today's youth and ***Qiviut*** makes an excellent case for them. As I grow older, it amazes me how creative some young people are. ***Qiviut #2*** is filled with fiction, clip art, drawings (some haunting) and recommendations of books, films, etc. It is my hope that **Lin** and **Sin** continue to write and create because it will only enrich us. (**Qiviut** c/o Sin 7534 Farmington Ave Portage, MI 49002 or Lin 7175 Crown Pointe Portage, MI 49002) **n. bates.**

Room Magazine April '95 16pp free

Man, you get north of the border and everything gets milder, except the beer. Canada's **Room Magazine** is a mighty polite and literate 'zine, with even the worst stuff given a fair hearing before being shown out the back door. Hell, they even manage to touch on politics without screeching or fawning. Admirable. (**Room** PO Box 7183 Windsor, Ontario N9C 3Z1 Canada) **Scott Joyner**.

Static #11 50pp. $3.00

Another metal 'zine, but this one suffers from confusing layout, therefore making it difficult to get interested. The material covered is worth reading if you can fight your way through the thing. (**Static** 115 E. River Road Kawkawlin, MI 48631) **D. Wood**.

Tail Spins #23 & #24 128pp. $3.00

The cream of the crop in the Midwest, by far the best music magazine in the region. Well written, well laid out, well...everything. I read this magazine and let my imagination run wild with the possibilities of how good **ETCH** can (and hopefully will) be in a couple of years. You get interviews, articles, live reviews and an out-n-out ton of music and 'zine reviews. Quality all the way around, **Brent Ritzel** and crew deserve your attention, and once they get it, they'll keep it. Guaranteed. (**Tail Spins** POB 5467 Evanston, IL 60204) **n. bates**.

The Unreported News 12 pp. $1.95

Do you believe government is a necessary evil? Do you think it is inherent in the nature of government to grow continually in all directions, unless carefully watched and regularly pruned? If you answered yes, add yourself to the roll of readers of ***The Unreported News***

John Mangopolous, local right-wing guru and public access TV star, publishes this BI-monthly newspaper, which gleans stories from all kinds of conservative and individualist journals nationwide. Added to this mix are local articles, usually written by pastors of zany "Bible-believing" churches, expounding on whatever it is that moves their fevered hearts. The latter are silly and negligible, but the rest of the material is disturbing and eye-opening, especially the stories of the **FBI's** and **Delta Force's** abuse of power. The story of **Gordon Kahl**, a tax-refusenik who was allegedly butchered by the **Delta Force**, is fascinating and sickening and still unfolding. This is enough to keep you interested for months to come. (***The Unreported News*** POB 22036 Lansing, MI 48909) **Scott Joyner.**

NEWS

Fred "Sonic" Smith Memorial Service

A calm and celebratory air filled the Old Mariner's Church on All Soul's Day, 1995. Friends and family gathered to perform a memorial and dedication service for the monument in memory of the late **Mr. Smith. Patti Smith** led some of the service with her longtime collaborator and friend, **Lenny Kaye,** on guitar singing "Farewell Reel" and "Paths That Cross." Patti commented that the composition of "Paths" was part of a comforting process resulting from the loss of a friend and that it was never realized that it would someday comfort those who knew and missed its co-writer, Fred. After "Paths," the procession out to the bell tower commenced. Soon we found ourselves staring up the tower at the 8-feet high and square monument being dedicated to **Fred "Sonic" Smith.**

The Three Crosses monument can be clearly seen on both the Jefferson Avenue side of the bell tower and a smaller set of crosses is affixed to the Windsor-Detroit Tunnel side. Because Fred "loved church bells," it made the setting for this monument "just perfect," said Patti. Fred and Patti were married in the Old Mariner's Church and because of its history as a "beacon and comfort to weary sea travelers," the Church was Fred's favorite Detroit site. The $13,000 that the **Frederick D. Smith Memorial Service** raised, was gathered for the purchase of a monument to **Fred Smith,** something that was meant to be a reminder of Fred and synonymous with Detroit. Ms. Smith amiably invited the public to attend the service, making it possible for those touched by Fred's art to share in the service with friends and family.

In addition to letting those concerned with the well-being of the Smith family know they are "doing fine," the ceremony also thanked those who took part in the fundraising that helped establish the memorial fund and the monument that now stands high above Jefferson Avenue in downtown Detroit. Anyone interested in contributing to the **Frederick D. Smith Memorial Fund** is invited to direct gifts to the fund's beneficiary: Old Mariner's Church, 170 E. Jefferson, Detroit, Michigan. ***Surdu.***

Teen Dance Party Turns Ugly

A Lansing dance party became violent on Thanksgiving evening when more than 15 shots rang out at the Frandor Bingo Hall during an all-ages teen dance that followed a concert by local rap kingpins, **Simken Heights**. The concert, which had happened earlier in the evening and had gone off without a hitch, was followed by the teen dance and that's when the trouble began. One man was shot and was taken to Sparrow Hospital, another individual was shot but fled without being treated by paramedics.

The concert featured **YTG** from Ypsilanti, Lansing rap group **Products Of The Ghetto**, the increasingly popular **Simken Heights** and Lansing rapper **Kamal. Darren Sutton**, member of **Simken Heights**, said, "The concert went really well. We had about 250 people, a good mix of black and white kids, and no trouble at all. But the trouble happened during the dance later." Of course the Lansing media jumped all over the story and Friday morning all the local news programs led off with the shootings, the video tape prominently showing a **Simken Heights** poster on the door of the bingo hall. Very poor publicity considering the number of venues willing to do rap shows in Lansing in the first place, now with this recent situation the number shrinks from one to zero. "The bingo hall was the only place that we found that would let us do a concert," said Sutton. "And now because of a couple of knuckleheads, it sure won't be able to happen again."

Punk rock was a dirty word when it came to live music in this town, but now it seems that rap has taken over as the dangerous element, at least in the minds of the timid club owners in Lansing. Slowly but surely, with the help of talented acts like **Simken Heights**, Lansing is being established as a viable hip-hop/rap outlet with a wealth of creative talent itching to let loose. But with problems like the one at Frandor, the possibilities seem limited. Why not at the Small Planet? Why not at Rick's, didn't **Kid Rock** play there last summer? What about less traditional venues *away* from East Lansing? It can be done and I hope those out there trying to organize, like **Simken Heights**, won't be deterred in their efforts. According to Sutton, a concert is being planned for January that will feature legendary Detroit rapper **Esham**, but that will likely take place in Jackson, some 30 miles south of Lansing. --***D. Wood***.

Earth Crisis In Automobile Accident

Sunday, December 10th, while halfway through a national club tour, Syracuse, New York's **Earth Crisis** was stopped short by an automobile accident.

The accident occurred the evening after playing a show at Seatlle's **Old Firehouse**. The band was traveling towards Salt Lake City, Utah, for their next show. While driving, they encountered a severe snowstorm, which caused their van to go over a cliff. The van flipped several times, shattering glass and throwing three of the five band members from the vehicle. Equipment, merchandise and many articles in the van were found as far as 300 yards away.

Injured in the accident were drummer **Dennis Merrick**, who suffered two collapsed lungs and was hospitalized at an unspecified Washington hospital for two weeks, and roadie **Jim Winters**, who underwent surgery to remove his spleen. The remaining members, **Ian Edwards** (bass), **Karl Buechner** (vocals), and **Kris Wiechmann** (guitar) suffered minor injuries. All are expected to fully recover.

Earth Crisis were recently the focus of a special on **CNN** entitled **"Network Earth**," and a similar broadcast on **TBS** entitled, **"Earth Matters**," which allowed the band to discuss their strong views concerning veganism, environmentalism, straight-edge and the state of the Earth today. The night before their accident, in Portland, Oregon, a news crew from **CBS's *48 Hours*** covered their show and talked with the band. A broadcast date has not yet been confirmed.

Earth Crisis will return home to Syracuse, and after some vacation and recovery time, plan to record their next album to follow up 1995's ***Destroy the Machines*** for **Victory Records**. --***Diane Vinikour***

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CONCERT DATES

JANUARY 10TH

Head Injury **Surge To Union** *Rockhouse* Lansing
Hawktones *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe* Grand Rapids

JANUARY 11TH

Dan Zanes *The Magic Stick* Detroit
LID **Dead Kings** *The Magic Bag* Ferndale
The Impatients **Wally Pleasant** *Blind Pig* Ann Arbor
Smokin' Joe Kubek *State Theater* Kalamazoo
The Moore Bros. *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 12TH

Waka Jawaka **Restroom Poets** **Sister Seed** *The Magic Bag*
Benefit for Newspaper Strikers *Alvin's*
Calamity Jane **Blue Nation** **Shessohuge** **See Dick Run** **Holy Cows** *The Foundry* Detroit
Junior Valentine & The All Stars *R.K.C.*
Smokin' Joe Kubek *Easy Street Cafe* Bowling Green, OH

JANUARY 13TH

Motorhead **Speedball** *Harpo's* Detroit
The Tyde **Restroom Poets** **Scott Fab** *Alvin's* Detroit
Jesters Crown **Indrama** **Voice of Reason** *The Foundry*
Shifter CD release party *The Magic Bag*
Ken Saydek *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 15TH

Madhouse *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 17TH

20 Dead Flower Children *Rockhouse*
Hawktones *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 18TH

Slot 5 **Horse Johnson** *Alvin's*
Junior Valentine & The All Stars *R.K.C.*

JANUARY 19TH

STATIC presents: **17 Reasons Why** **Thunderharp Choir** *Alvin's* Detroit
Blue Eyed Soul **Howling Diablos** *The Foundry* Detroit
JV & The All Stars *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 20TH

Menthol **Triple Fast Action** *The Shelter* 6:00PM -- **New Bomb Turks** 8:00PM
Red Tree *Lili's 21* Hamtramck
Skinhorse **Fathers of the Id** **Snake Oil** *The Foundry* Detroit
KATHART presents: **The Providers** **Bob Gentry** **Kevin Pruett** + more! *Alvin's*
2nd Annual DETROIT ROCKABILLY SHAKEDOWN *The Majestic* Detroit
Johnnie Basset & The Blues Insurgents *R.K.C.* Grand Rapids

JANUARY 22ND

Madhouse *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 24TH

Drip **Five Story Fall** *Rockhouse* Lansing
Hawktones *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 25TH

Roddie Romero/The Rockin' Cajuns *R.K.C.*

JANUARY 26TH

Tesla Paw *State Theater* Detroit
Down With Hatred **Cold As Life** *The Foundry* Detroit
STATIC & Bootsey Collins present: **Shag Tickweasel** *Alvin's* Detroit
Ben Folds Five *7th House* Pontiac
JV & The All Stars *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 27TH

Into Another **The Sense Field** *The Shelter* Detroit
Magic Dragon **Purple Fly** **Crumble** *Alvin's* Detroit
Calamity Jane **Sickroom** **Red September** *The Foundry* Detroit

JANUARY 28TH

Hammerhead **Thrall** **Cromwell** *The Shelter* Detroit

JANUARY 29TH

Dorothy Motor Dolls *Rick's* E. Lansing
Madhouse *Rhythm Kitchen Cafe*

JANUARY 31ST

Hawktones w/ Hank & Junior *R.K.C.*

FEBRUARY 8TH

Everclear **No Doubt** **Ruth Rutn** *St. Andrew's* Detroit
Buckwheat Zydeco 7th House

FEBRUARY 10TH

Detroit's 9th Annual Erotic Poetry Festival featuring **Bootsey X & The Lovemasters** *Alvin's* Detroit
Napalm Death *Harpo's* Detroit

FEBRUARY 16TH

Red Tree *The Magic Bag* Ferndale

RELEASE DATES

JANUARY 16TH

Eric's Trip Purple Blue (**Sub Pop**)
Merauder Master Killer (**Century Media**)
Teen Angels Daddy (**Sub Pop**)
Friends Of Dean Martinez 7" (**Sub Pop**)
Spinanes Madding 7" (**Sub Pop**)

JANUARY 22ND

One Life Crew Crime Ridden Society (**Victory**)
Strife *Grey* 7" (**Victory**)

JANUARY 23RD

Chune Big Hat, No Cattle (**Headhunter**)
Mystery Machine Ten Speed (**Nettwerk**)

JANUARY 30TH

Glactic Cowboys Machine Fish (**Metal Blade**)
Napalm Death Diatribes (**Earache**)
Micheal Rose Be Yourself (**Heartbeat**)
Thought Industry Outer Space is Just a Martini Away (**Metal Blade**)
Trouble Plastic Green Head (**Century Media**)

FEBRUARY 13TH

Grifters Ain't My Lookout (**Sub Pop**)
Immolation Here in After (**Metal Blade**)
Only Living Witness Innocents (**Century Media**)
Chixdiggit Shadowy 7" (**Sub Pop**)
The Starkweathers Lied To 7" (**Sub Pop**)

FEBRUARY 19TH

V/A Victory Style (**Victory**)
Integrity Humanity is the Devil 10" (**Victory**)

FEBRUARY 20TH

Big Ass Truck Kent (**Upstart**)
The Wipers The Herd (**Tim/Kerr**)

FEBRUARY 27TH

Combustible Edison Schizophonic (**Sub Pop**)
Omatic Dog Years (**Grass**)
Sacred Reich Healed (**Metal Blade**)
Spinanes Strand (**Sub Pop**)
The Wrens Seacaucus (**Grass**)
Modest Mouse Broke 7" (**Sub Pop**)

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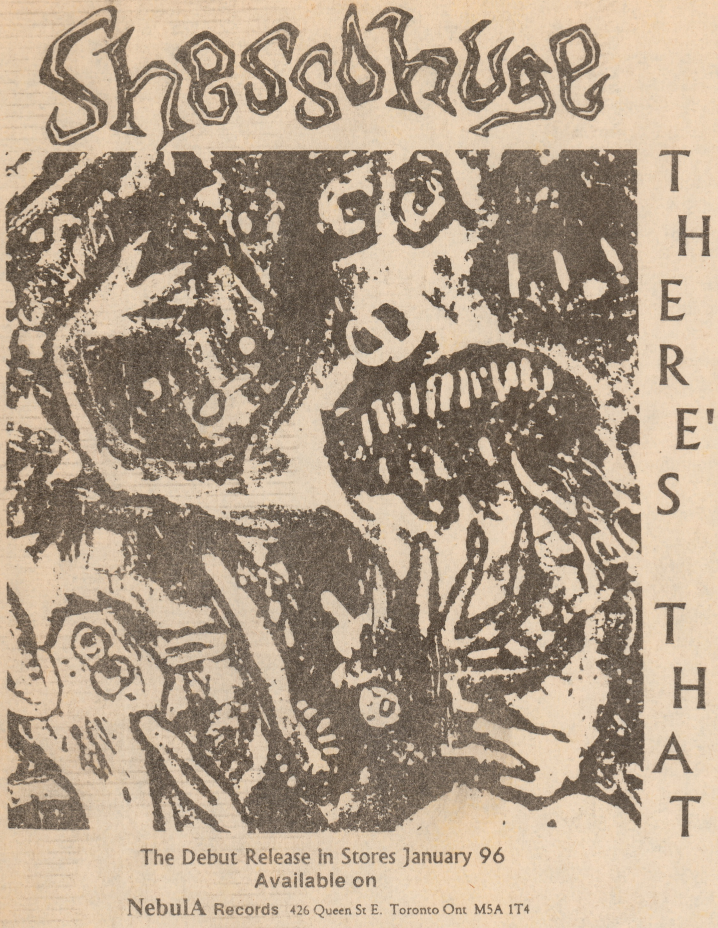
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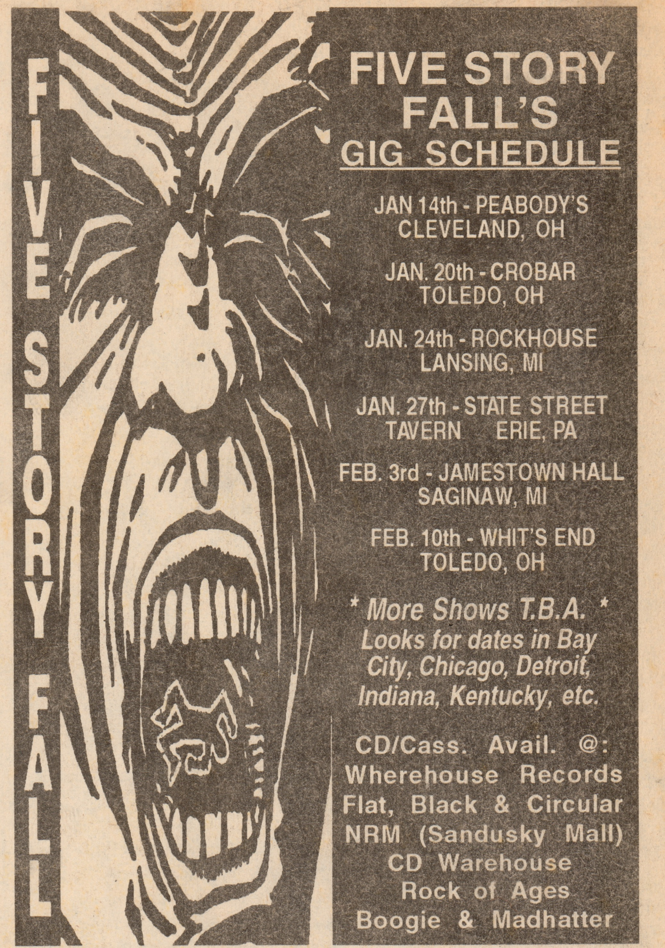
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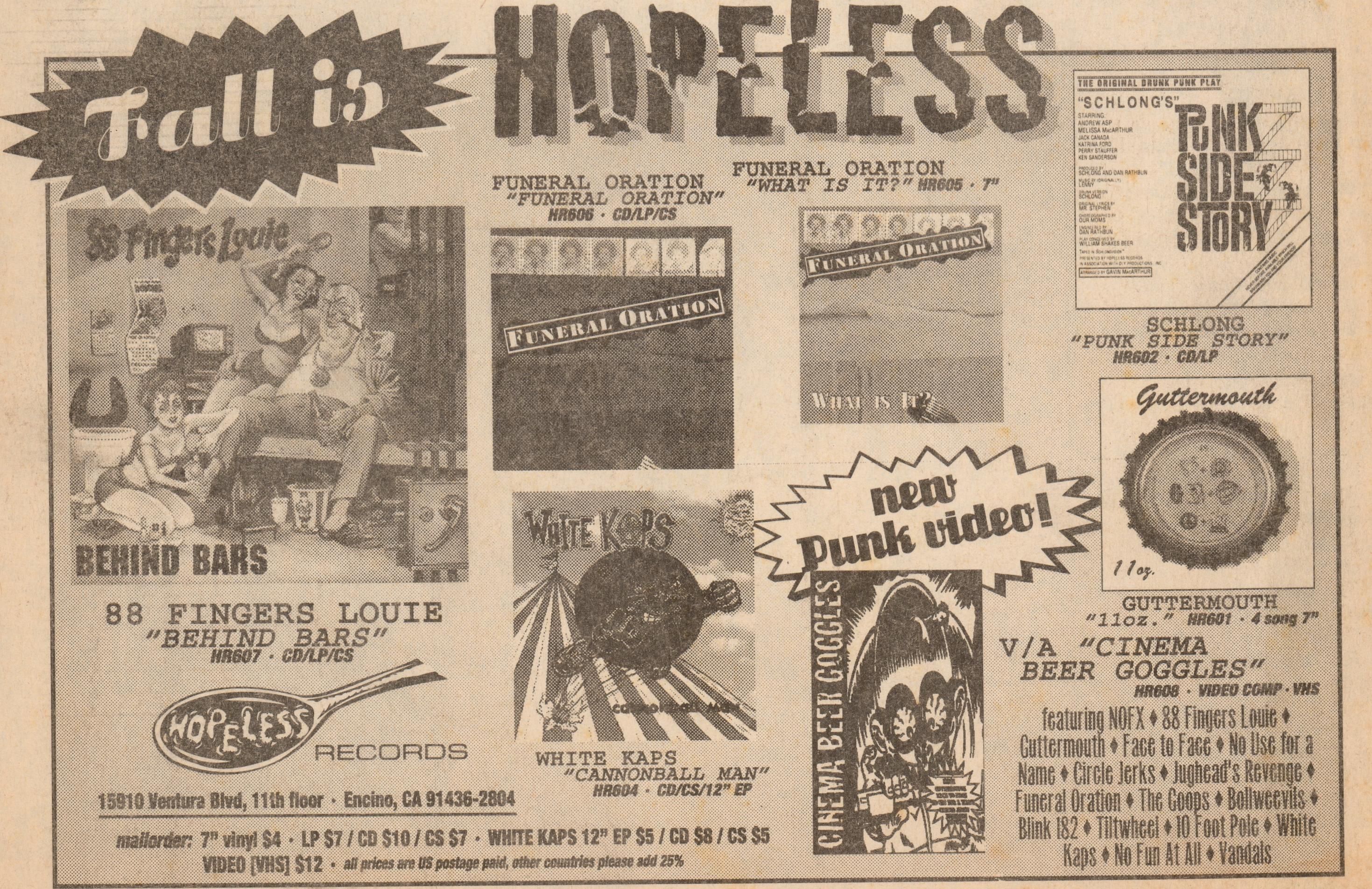
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